

THE ANGLO-MYSORE WAR OF 1767-1769: A STUDY OF THE MILITARY CAMPAIGNS OF HAIDAR ALI

*A Thesis submitted to the Pondicherry University
in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the award of the degree of*

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN
HISTORY**

BY

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled ***THE ANGLO-MYSORE WAR OF 1767-1769: A STUDY OF THE MILITARY CAMPAIGNS OF HAIDAR ALI***, submitted to the Pondicherry University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History, is a record of original research work done by **Mr. Krishna Kumar Panjaje** during the period of his study 2013-2016 in the Department of History, Pondicherry University, under my supervision and guidance and that the thesis has not formed the basis for the award of any Degree/Diploma/Associateship/Fellowship or any other similar titles before.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis entitled ***THE ANGLO-MYSORE WAR OF 1767-1769: A STUDY OF THE MILITARY CAMPAIGNS OF HAIDAR ALI***, submitted to the Pondicherry University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History, is a record of original research work done by me under the supervision and guidance of **Dr. K. Venugopal Reddy**, during the period of my study 2013-2016 in the Department of History, Pondicherry University, and that the thesis has not formed the basis for the award of any Degree/Diploma/Associateship/Fellowship or any other similar titles before.

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GLOSSARY

<i>Ahasham</i>	Irregular infantry in Haidar Ali's army armed with matchlocks used for skirmishing and guarding baggage carts.
<i>Aide de Camp</i>	Officer in European armies who acts as the assistant to the commanding officer.
<i>Avval</i>	The soldiers in Haidar Ali's army who were trained by European officers and were commanded by them.
<i>Bakshi</i>	The dispenser of the royal grants. Often this would make him the paymaster of the army.
<i>Ban</i>	The rocket used in warfare in many parts of India.
<i>Bargir</i>	Cavalrymen in Indian armies whose horses were supplied by the state.
<i>Barh/Barr</i>	The regular infantry in the standing army of Haidar Ali which had been trained by Europeans.
<i>Bedar</i>	Community found in the Deccan which often formed the camp followers of armies.
<i>Candachar</i>	Labourers who did odd jobs such as building, scouting, messengering and sometimes acted as irregular troops.
<i>Carnatic Balaghat</i>	The upland of the Deccan extending from the Tungabhadra river to the junction of the Eastern and the Western Ghats.
<i>Carnatic Payanghat</i>	The region south of the Kaveri river extending up to the Indian Ocean.
<i>Chaubuc</i>	A whip consisting of a long strap of leather attached to a wooden stick.
<i>Chauth/chouth</i>	A tribute extracted by the Maratha armies from the neighbouring states; usually it amounted to one fourth of the estimated land revenue of a particular state.
<i>Chela</i>	A battalion in Haidar Ali's elite bodyguard comprising of orphans that he had brought up.
<i>Cowle</i>	A written statement of safe-conduct or amnesty.
<i>Daftar</i>	Collection of official documents of the Peshwa.

<i>Dalavayi</i>	Commander-in-Chief of the Mysore army.
<i>Diwan</i>	The Chief minister of the Nizam of Hyderabad.
<i>Diwani</i>	Authority to collect taxes and maintain accounts.
<i>Dragoon</i>	Heavy cavalry in European armies.
<i>Duum</i>	Troops in Haidar Ali's army who were trained in the traditional methods of warfare.
<i>Faujdar</i>	Military officer placed in charge of the administration of a district.
<i>Flying Column</i>	A lightly armed company of troops which aimed at achieving speed and surprise.
<i>Forlorn Hope</i>	General European term for the leading troops in an assault, especially against a strongly defended position
<i>Gallivat</i>	Small vessel steered using both oars and sails, extensively used in the Arabian sea.
<i>Ghurab</i>	Sailing ship used by Indian sailors.
<i>Gingall/Jingal</i>	Light swivel-gun.
<i>Harkara</i>	A messenger who delivered letters on foot.
<i>Hussar</i>	Light cavalry in European armies.
<i>Jagir</i>	Land grant, equivalent to fiefdom, held by Indian aristocracy.
<i>Juzail-bardar</i>	The soldiers who used rockets in Haidar's army.
<i>Killedar</i>	The commander of a fort (<i>kill</i>) and its garrison.
<i>Kist</i>	Generic term for land revenue in southern India.
<i>Kos</i>	Indian system of measurement of distance, usually 4 km.
<i>Masnad/musnud</i>	A sumptuously covered seat reserved for someone of high rank.
<i>Nawayat</i>	Community of Arabian descent found in the west coast of India.
<i>Nayak</i>	Commander of a troop of soldiers in the armies of peninsular India.

<i>Pagoda</i>	Generic term for gold coins in south India; its value varied according to locality.
<i>Patti</i>	A roll containing the description of the soldier and his antecedents.
<i>Peshwa</i>	Chief minister under the Maratha kings who emerged as the de-facto ruler of the Maratha empire in the eighteenth century.
<i>Pettah</i>	The outlying settlement near a fort.
<i>Pindari</i>	Camp followers who often acted as scouts and took a share of the captured plunder.
<i>Polygar</i>	Regional kings and chieftains in southern India.
<i>Sahukar</i>	Moneylenders and bankers in the Carnatic region.
<i>Sanad/sunnud</i>	Official grant, especially of a right to territory or authority.
<i>Sardar</i>	Commander of a troop of cavalymen in the Maratha army.
<i>Sarkar/Circar</i>	Administrative district, especially in Mughal India and its succeeding states.
<i>Sarvadhikari</i>	Chief minister of Mysore.
<i>Silahadar</i>	Cavalrymen who had to buy and equip their own horses.
<i>Subedar</i>	Originally an administrator of a province, later a high-ranking military commander in Indian armies
<i>Tattu</i>	Mountain ponies found in the Deccan.
<i>Thana</i>	An outpost manned by Maratha soldiers.
<i>Topass</i>	An offspring of a Portuguese or Dutch father and a local mother in India and Java, with a great reputation as a mercenary.
<i>Ustranal/Shaturnal</i>	A swivel gun mounted on a camel.
<i>Vakil</i>	Agent or emissary, usually representing a high-ranking official.
<i>Zanana</i>	The women's section of the palace or the household.

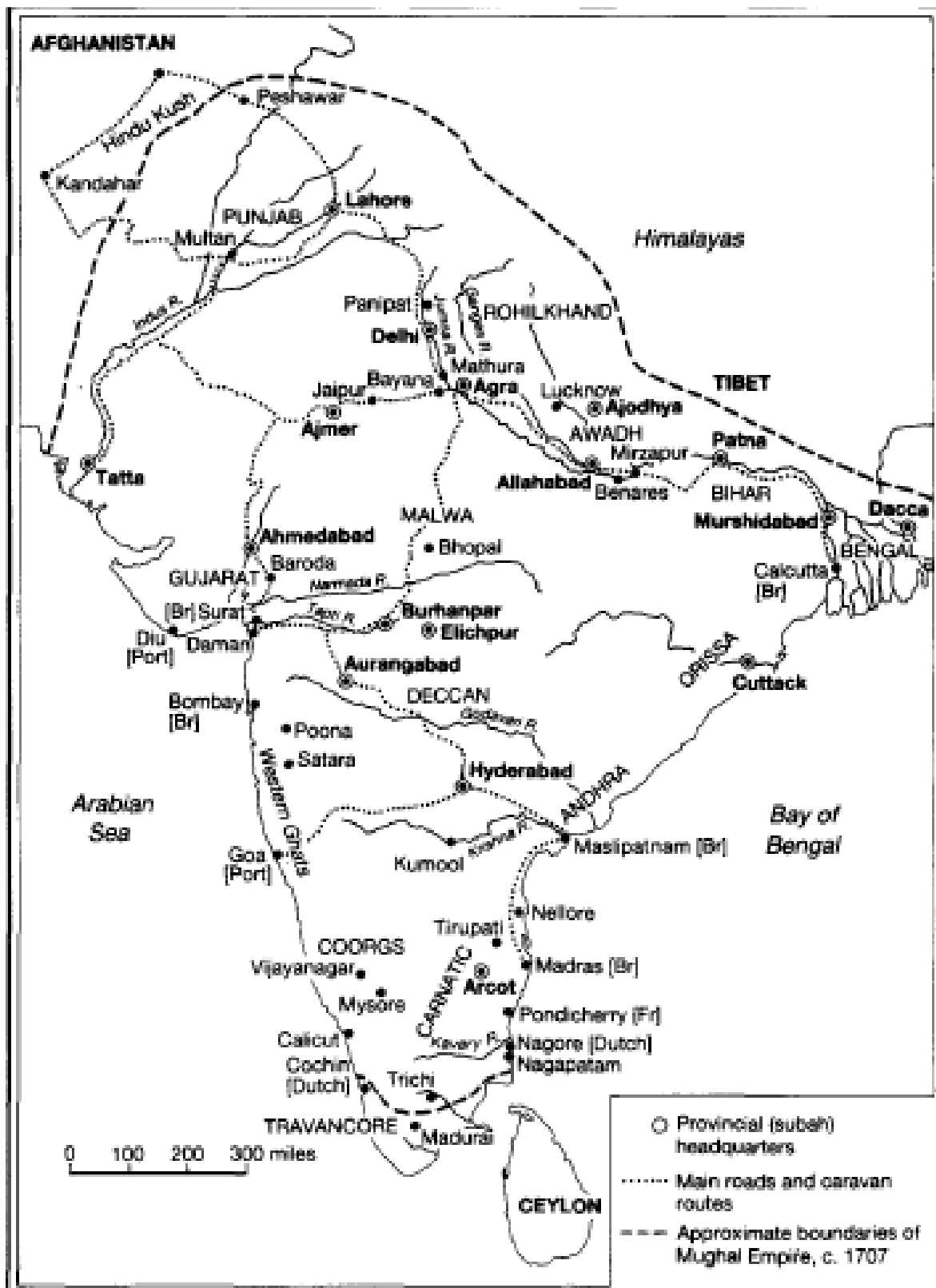
Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

“War is the father of all things” said the Greek philosopher Heraclitus in the 6th century BCE. This statement has withstood the test of time. Any major change in the life of human beings - be it political, social, economic or technological, often has its roots in a conflict between two or more sides. The birth, death and rebirth of countries were forged in the crucible of war. This has been true from the time of the Egyptians up to the 21st century. For example, the conquests of Alexander opened up Asia to trade and travel by the Europeans, which led to the exchange of knowledge and ideas between the East and the West.

Conflict and bloodshed have been inseparable aspects of human development. Since the beginning of recorded history, there were very few timelines that had not witnessed warfare of any kind. The casualty rates of the First and Second World Wars were unprecedented compared to previous conflicts. The scale of the devastation caused the emergence of peace movements the world over, calling for abolition of war and of weapons of mass destruction. In these contexts, it is important to study armed conflict in order to identify the causes and effects, which may help to pre-empt similar patterns of events in the future. As the philosopher George Santayana said in his book *Reason in Common Sense* (1905), “Those who cannot remember the past are doomed to repeat it.”

Military history is a relatively new branch in the field of major historiographies. Though the descriptions and focal aspects of war and strategy are evident in ancient literatures such as the *Iliad* of Homer and the *Mahabharata* of Vyasa, the study of war as a discipline of historical relevance and significance did not emerge till the nineteenth century. Though many works of literature such as Sun Tzu’s *Art of War* in the Chinese language and Kautilya’s *Arthashastra* in the Sanskrit language describe warfare in great detail, it was only after the Napoleonic wars that the world started to study the causes, courses and consequences of conflicts objectively. Works like Carl von Clausewitz’s *On War* (1832) and Alfred Thayer Mahan’s *The Influence of Sea Power upon History* (1890) sparked an interest in the general public about military affairs and encouraged the study of the techniques of war as a scientific endeavour in the discipline of history. However, it was only in the aftermath of the major conflicts of the 20th century that military history came of age. Works of historians like A.J.P. Taylor’s *The Origins of the Second World War* (1961), John Keegan’s *A History of Warfare* (1993), Martin Gilbert’s *The First World War* (1994) and Geoffrey Parker’s *Military*



Above: India in the eighteenth century. Source: C.A. Bayly, *The New Cambridge History of India, Bengal: The British Bridgehead*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 17.

Revolution: Military Innovation and the Rise of the West, 1500-1800 (1988) etc. are very famous in this field.

The study of military history is yet to fully develop as a major discipline in Indian historiography. The first systematic studies of wars and battles in India were mainly due to the efforts of the historians of the colonial era. It is seen that the overwhelming focus of the study of war in India has been on the rise of the British Empire. One of the earliest works in this area is Robert Orme's *History of the Military Transactions of the Nation of Indostan from 1745*, which was mainly an account of the Carnatic Wars between the British and the French and appeared in two volumes between 1763 and 1778. Orme relied on memoirs and official correspondence of the British officials to write his history. This was the usual methodology followed by British and other colonial historians in writing about military affairs in the subcontinent. Later works such as Mark Wilks' *Historical Sketches of the South of India* about Mysore, first published in 1817, and James Grant Duff's *A History of the Mahrattas*, which appeared in 1826, drew heavily on British records for the reconstruction of wars and battles. This pattern repeats in the studies of the Maratha Wars where the role of Arthur Wellesley (the future Duke of Wellington) is highlighted and the Sikh Wars which rely heavily on Sir Hugh Gough's reminiscences.

The most famous conflict in the historiography of British India is the Revolt of 1857 which inspired a wealth of literature, notably Sir John Kaye's *History of the Sepoy War in India* which was continued by George B. Malleson in *The History of the Indian Mutiny*. The histories of the other European powers in India such as the French, the Dutch and the Portuguese have received considerably less attention except when they were the adversaries of the British. Later on, several major works on the French and Portuguese Empires did come out such as Sidney Owen's *Dupleix and the Indian Empire* (1887) and Malleson's *History of the French in India (From the founding of Pondicherry to the capture of that place in 1761)* (1893), which dealt with the rise and decline of French power in India; and Frederick Danvers' *The Portuguese in India* (1894) and Richard Whiteway's *The Rise of Portuguese Power in India* (1899) on the Portuguese. From the 1930s onwards, works by Indian historians in the field of military history also began to be published. Jadunath Sarkar's works *Military History of India* (1935) and *Famous Battles of Indian History* (1938), dealt mainly with the wars of the Mughals. Later on, Surendra Nath Sen's *Military System of the Marathas* (1953) studied the Maratha army and his other work entitle *Eighteen Fifty Seven* (1957) was

the centenary volume of the Revolt of 1857. The aforementioned historians primarily studied the pre-British period.

After India's independence in 1947, historical study shifted to the social and economic aspects of India's past. Political and military events were mainly studied under the lens of the end of colonialism, with great focus on the causal relationship between the events. Though there was some focus on the military technology of the Mughals and other kingdoms by historians like Iqtidar Alam Khan in his papers *Early Use of Cannon and Musket in India: A.D. 1442-1526* (1981) and *Coming of Gunpowder to the Islamic World and North India: Spotlight on the role of the Mongols* (1996) which culminated in his book *Gunpowder and Firearms: Warfare in Medieval India* (2004), the study of actual military battles and tactics has received considerably less attention. The result was that the study of war for its own sake receded and was largely studied as an adjunct to a larger research project. It was only in the last decade of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century that military history again emerged as a major area of research in Indian historiography. The various conflicts in which the Indian army had been involved since 1947 led to increased public and scholarly interest in the country's wars and battles. Initially, the works consisted of memoirs and reports by military personnel; but later on historians conducted scholarly research into the military aspects of the history of the subcontinent.

Two names stand out in the study of Indian Military History, viz. Kaushik Roy and Pradeep Barua. Kaushik Roy, in his work *War, Culture and Society in Early Modern South Asia, 1740-1849* (2011) analysed warfare in the context of larger social and cultural changes in society. Pradeep Barua focussed on the armed forces of colonial India and has written several books on the evolution of the Indian army such as *Gentlemen of the Raj: The Indian Army Officer Corps* (2003) and *The State at War in South Asia* (2005). Also, a number of writers who are mostly retired military professionals have also written a number of books on wars in Indian history. Their books often contain in-depth analysis of the military aspects such as tactics and weapons. Other military personnel have written about their personal experiences during the campaigns. One of the foremost names in this regard is the late Maj. Gen. Gurcharan Singh Sandhu. His books *The Military History of Ancient India* (2003) and *The Military History of Medieval India* (2005) are notable in the study of Indian military history. In his books, Gen. Sandhu not only analyses the battles but also goes into the causes and aftermaths of the wars and battles from ancient times up to the rise of the Maratha

confederacy. The net result of such literature has been to increase awareness of military history as well as to spur interest about military affairs in general among the general public

However, most of the historiographical works discussed above (except those of Jadunath Sarkar who relied extensively on Persian and Indian sources in addition to European ones), especially those dealing with colonial India, rely heavily on European sources and tend to neglect Indian ones with little effort at comparing and correlating the two. Also, the European sources are usually given greater weight than their Indian counterparts and are often accepted at face value. It is in this context that the present study on the First Anglo-Mysore War assumes significance. The events of this war can be regarded as a microcosm of warfare in India during the 1700s.

Statement of the Problem

The First Anglo-Mysore War of 1767-1769 is a landmark event in the history of the subcontinent in general and peninsular India in particular. It marked the beginning of more than thirty years of warfare between the kingdom of Mysore and the expanding East India Company, which were the main protagonists of the conflict, while the other powers such as the Marathas and the Nizam of Hyderabad played a secondary role. The outcome of the war was momentous as it resulted in a decisive victory for Haidar Ali, the ruler of Mysore, against the forces of the governor of Madras, Charles Bouchier. For the first time since the British East India Company began to expand territorially in the 18th century, an Indian ruler had actually dictated peace terms to the British in India. However, this war has not received the attention it deserves from historians. British historians like Mark Wilks, W.J. Wilson and Lewin B. Bowring conventionally mark the beginning of the war in August 1767 with Haidar Ali's invasion of the Carnatic. This convention is followed by Indian historians such as C. Hayavadana Rao, Narendra Krishna Sinha, and B. Sheikh Ali, all of whom have used the methodology of the British historians by relying extensively on British accounts such as that of Fort Saint George, while neglecting other sources such as the works of French and Indian writers. As a result, the historiography of the Anglo-Mysore Wars has remained one-dimensional, where British victories are described in detail but Haidar Ali's own victories are downplayed. Thus while the victories of British commanders like Colonels Smith and Wood have been described vividly in the historical accounts hitherto, there is no similar description of Haidar Ali's exploits or those of his commanders like Faizullah Khan and Makhdoom Ali Khan.

The present research study endeavours to rectify the above lacunae by studying the accounts of Indian writers like Mir Hussain Kirmani and Ramachandra Rao Punganuri and also French writers like Maistre de la Tour and then comparing them to the British sources in order to provide a more balanced and objective account of the First Anglo-Mysore War by highlighting the strengths and weaknesses as well as the victories and defeats of all the parties involved in the conflict. The main point to be noted is that, contrary to the conventional view, the war started earlier in January 1767 with the formation of a hostile alliance against Haidar Ali by the Marathas, the Nizam, and the British at Madras and the concomitant invasion of the territories of Mysore. The conflict continued with varying fortunes for the individual powers over the next two years combined with complex diplomatic manoeuvring to gain and detach allies. It finally ended with a bold attack against Madras by Haidar Ali in 1769, which led to the surrender of the Madras governor Charles Bouchier. The study shows that Haidar Ali was a master tactician who ruthlessly made use of any opportunities that came in his way but failed to gauge the strategic situation from a long-term point of view. His tactics can be compared to those of Napoleon who faced a hostile coalition of European powers arrayed against France; but as they lacked coordination with each other, they were defeated in a piecemeal fashion by the French emperor.

Although his son Tipu Sultan is widely studied in Indian historiography, Haidar Ali himself remains a relatively obscure figure. The only major studies of him by Indian historians were in the 1940s and the 1950s with the works of N.K. Sinha and B. Sheikh Ali. Modern historians such as Mohibbul Hasan have neglected the father though they have studied the son in great detail. Even in the recent work *Confronting Colonialism: Resistance and Modernization under Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan*, edited by Irfan Habib and Barun De and published in 2002, the narrative starts with the Second Anglo-Mysore War in 1780 and there is no mention of the previous conflict in 1767. This could be in part because the First Anglo-Mysore War did not involve the participation of famous personalities like Eyre Coote, Lord Cornwallis and Lord Wellesley who were intimately tied with the later conflicts. Another reason for this could be that the British sources are more numerous and more accessible compared to sources in other languages as many letters and documents were lost during the sack of Srirangapatna in 1799. As a result, there has hardly been a systematic study of the War of 1767-1769 in independent India despite its importance in Indian history. Therefore, the present research aims to rectify that by examining the background and the rise of the Mysore ruler, studying one of his most important military campaigns in great detail, while

painstakingly analysing the strong and weak points in his plans and his armies throughout the war.

Objectives of the Study

The following are the chief objectives of the study.

- An in-depth study of the battles and campaigns by all the sides in this war including the major commanders and leaders.
- An analysis of the strategy and tactics as well as the manoeuvring involved in the fighting with a focus on why events turned out the way they did.
- The study of the complex interaction between the Mysore and the Marathas, the Nizam as well as the British during the war and an analysis of their significance to the events and who gained ultimately.
- The use of Indian and foreign sources, both primary and secondary, to reconstruct the events through their comparison and correlation and thereby locate the historical significance of the First Anglo-Mysore War.
- A study of the weapons and equipment and logistics used during the campaigning.
- An analysis of the aftermath of the war along with the consequences for each of the combatants as well as a study of how it had influenced the future events.

Limitations of the Study

There are certain limitations associated with the present study of the First Anglo-Mysore War. First and foremost, the non-British primary sources on the subject are neither numerous nor all-encompassing which is one of the reasons for paucity of writings on this subject. Many of these writings have been translated by British scholars which renders them suspect. Secondly, due to constraints of a financial nature and other resources, the research scholar was unable to access many original British records which are kept in the Oriental and India Office Collection in London and in the British Archives. Hence, the present study extensively used reliable quotations of the same from secondary sources listed in the bibliography. Great care was taken in the compilation and correlation of sources in order to draw up plausible hypotheses or to examine existing ones. Thirdly, as the present research work is a study of the military tactics of Haidar Ali, it seeks to particularly focus on that aspect rather than others. Also, for purposes of clarity and continuity, the most well-known place names are used such as Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and Thiruchirappalli.

Research Methodology

The present study has conducted an exhaustive survey of the primary sources and secondary sources for the reign of Haidar Ali with particular reference to the First Anglo-Mysore War. Extensive fieldwork was undertaken to collect sources from national and state archives and libraries. After collecting the relevant documents, a minute comparison and correlation of the sources like letters, memoirs and official records as well as secondary sources was conducted in order to analyse and reconstruct the events of the war from all points of view. Finally, working hypotheses were drawn up using historical and analytical methods.

Hypotheses

The main hypotheses presented in the research work are:

- Rather than being the instigator as claimed by colonial historians, the First Anglo-Mysore War was forced on Haidar Ali due to the hostile alliance against him comprising of the Marathas, the Nizam and the British, and in particular due to the ambitions of the Madras government.
- The War started in the beginning of 1767 with the attack of the triple alliance on Mysore rather than in August with Haidar Ali's invasion of the Carnatic as stated by British historians.
- Haidar Ali's main strategy was to take advantage of the lack of unity among his opponents and thus detach individual powers from the alliance and defeat them.
- Though Haidar Ali was a skilled tactician, he lacked the strategic vision to exploit his successes for long-term gains as evidenced by his inability to enforce the treaties negotiated with other powers.

Review Of Literature

Haidar Ali is considered one of the major personalities in 18th century India. Therefore many works have been written about him, including memoirs, biographies and histories. However, the First Anglo-Mysore War is a little studied topic in the annals of the Mysore kingdom. Also, the war must be studied in light of the ideas and practices of military conflicts. In order to study this conflict, the greater world of Mysore-British interactions needs to be examined in detail. Therefore, a close perusal of the primary and secondary sources about the period

under consideration is necessary along with a study of the military environment including strategy and tactics. Some of the major works are as follows:

The History of Hyder Shah, alias Hyder Ali Khan Bahadur; or, New memoirs concerning the East Indies with Historical Notes by the Maistre de La Tour, first published in 1784 under the pen name M.M.D.L.T.

This is an eyewitness study of Haidar Ali written by a French officer in his army who had joined his army after the Third Carnatic War. Due to its first-hand account, it is a very useful primary source for the affairs of the kingdom of Mysore during this period and includes aspects of the personal life and habits of Haidar Ali as well as documenting his rise to power. The narrative ends with Haidar Ali's death in the middle of the Second Anglo-Mysore War in 1782. The work was first published in 1784 and has been translated a number of times. Its main importance lies in the fact that the author narrates a history of the First Anglo-Mysore War, giving the strengths and weaknesses of the different sides involved in the conflict. The book ends with the death of Haidar Ali and the ascension of Tipu Sultan to the throne. However, as the author was in the service of Mysore, he tends to overplay the victories of Haidar Ali and gloss over his defeats. Also, certain claims of his are untenable when matched with other sources. Nevertheless this is a very useful work to correlate with the other primary sources for information on the First Anglo-Mysore War.

The Life of Hyder Ally: With an account of his usurpation of the Kingdom of Mysore, and other contiguous provinces. To which is annexed, a genuine narrative of the sufferings of the British prisoners of war, taken by his son Tippoo Sahib, by Francis Robson, 1786

This book was written by Francis Robson, a veteran of the Second Anglo-Mysore War, mainly as a counter to the account of Maistre de la Tour which had appeared a couple of years earlier. The author makes it clear in the preface that his aim is to debunk the claims made by the Frenchman, whom he describes as a deserter and of a dissolute disposition. His decidedly hostile views towards the Mysore sultans seem to have been moulded by experiences in the war in which several prisoners of war were tortured by Tipu. The book narrates the events from the year 1728 with the youthful years of Haidar Ali and ends with the signing of the Treaty of Mangalore in 1784. The author gives a confused account of Haidar Ali's youth and upbringing, leaving out several important details. He is reasonably more accurate with regard to the First Anglo-Mysore War, particularly the aspects of the

Madras Army. He does not seem to have participated in the war as he does not provide any eyewitness description of the events, and so he may have gleaned the information from the participants of the conflict. The course of the Second Anglo-Mysore War is clearly described with the associated battlefield reports and treaties as he took part in this particular conflict. In spite of its faults, his work remains invaluable as a contemporary source of the Anglo-Mysore wars, and so provides information to compare with other sources.

History of Mysore under Hyder Ali and Tippoo Sultan by Joseph Michaud, 1801, Translated by Raman Menon on the order of the Raja of Panagal in 1924

This book is one of the earliest studies of Mysore and was done by the French historian Joseph Francois Michaud. It was originally published in French in the year 1801. It was translated into English in 1924 on the orders of the Raja of Pangal and was preserved in his library. Despite its title, the book dwells more on Tipu Sultan and comparatively less on Haidar Ali. Michaud himself had never been to India and thus relied on written accounts for most of the study. It attempts to trace the history of Mysore during the reigns of the aforementioned kings. It begins with a brief survey of the history of Mysore and the Mughal empire before the 18th century but quickly enters into the reign of Haidar Ali in the second chapter. Giving a brief summary of his conquests and wars, the book really commences with the rise of Tipu Sultan in the Second Anglo-Mysore War in 1782 after the death of Haidar Ali and deals chiefly with the relations between the British and Mysore. It ends with the death of the sultan in 1799 and his funeral rites. One of the biggest drawbacks of the book is that Michaud accepts all oral and written accounts at their face value and does not subject them to critical analysis. Also, he relies heavily on British sources which are not expected to give an even-handed treatment of the wars with Mysore.

Historical Sketches of the South of India in an attempt to trace the History of Mysore from the Origin of the Hindu Government of that State to the extinction of the Mohammedan Dynasty in 1799 by Mark Wilks, 3 volumes (original printing 1817)

This work is one of the most important early histories of Mysore. It was written by the political resident to the Mysore king, Mark Wilks who later received Napoleon at St. Helena Island. Considering that Wilks was present in the Carnatic during the last years of the Sultanate of Mysore, his work is valuable for assessing the contemporary British position in the region. The 3 volumes of his magnum opus are the first systematic historical studies of the region of Mysore from the 14th century to the early 19th century. He includes not only the

political events but also systems of administration as well as the customs of the people. His first volume deals in more detail about the First Anglo-Mysore war than many other works and includes the articles of the Treaty of Madras which ended the war. However, a glaring lacuna of his study is that he has relied on the records of the Madras Government for reconstructing the Anglo-Mysore Wars. Also, he tends to downplay or completely ignore many of Haidar Ali's victories during his wars. Also, he seems to have relied heavily on oral reports while writing his works and seems to have neglected several literary sources on the same subject. Nevertheless, his volumes remain invaluable to later historians as near contemporary accounts covering a broad range of subjects like culture and geography and thus were extensively used by later historians.

Secret Correspondence of the Peshwa, Madhu Rao, from the year 1761 to 1772, by John Briggs, published in the Transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, Volume 2, No. 1, 1829, pp. 109-165.

The historian John Briggs translated the original letters of Peshwa Madhav Rao I in creating this research paper and first read it to the Asiatic Society on May 3, 1828. They originally belonged to the private library of Nana Fadnavis which came into the hands of Briggs after the Second Anglo-Maratha War. The Nana was a close confidante of the Peshwa and hence was privy to confidential information. The book begins with an introduction from the 10th century and then continues through the reign of Aurangzeb and the Maratha rulers up to the time of Peshwa Madhav Rao I. The letters begin shortly after the rise of Madhav Rao in 1761 after the death of his father Balaji Baji Rao and continue till shortly before his death in 1772. Most of the correspondence is addressed to the Nana though a few are addressed to other officials. In fact, the series begins with a description of the invasion of Haidar Ali's Mysore by the Peshwa and his uncle Tryambak Rao. The series is of utility for studying the intricate power politics being played in the Maratha polity between the Peshwa and his uncle Raghunath Rao. It also contains details of the secret understandings between the Marathas and other rulers such as the Nizam of Hyderabad and Mysore and lists the terms of the treaties which were negotiated especially with Haidar Ali after the regular invasions of Mysore. It serves as a valuable aid for corroborating other sources about the period under study and gives an insight into the mind of Madhav Rao I who was one of the towering figures of 18th century India.

The History of Hydur Naik by Mir Hussain Ali Kirmani, trans. Col. William Miles, 1842

This was the official biography written by the court historian of Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan in Srirangapatna in the 1790s and is the first of two volumes, the second being the biography of Tipu. It was translated from Persian by the British administrator Col. William Miles and published in 1842. As can be expected of court historians, the protagonists are painted in glowing colours with high-sounding epithets and the more egregious of their faults such as Haidar Ali's defalcations are glossed over. Kirmani was also orthodox in his beliefs and champions the rulers of Mysore as Warriors of the Faith fighting against the infidels. However, he seems to have been impressed by the British army of Madras and describes it as a worthy opponent. The book begins with a genealogy of Haidar Ali's ancestors and then immediately goes on to his rise to power and the birth of Tipu and then continues with the events up to his death in 1782. Kirmani's account should be used with caution as there are several lacunae in his work. The most glaring shortcoming is that the chronology he uses is erroneous, often getting the dates wrong. Also, some of the events he describes seem to be purely imaginary. There is little description of Haidar Ali's early life before he gained prominence as a military commander. The concentration is almost entirely on the political events in the life and reign of Haidar Ali. But some facts, such as the early Maratha invasions of Mysore, are omitted from the narrative. Nevertheless, the book is an important source for studying the two rulers from their own perspective and is also useful for corroborating with other sources on the subject.

Memoirs of Hyder and Tippoo, by Ramachandra Rao Punganuri, trans. C.P. Brown, 1849

This book is a translation of the memoirs of Ramachandra Rao Punganuri who was an official under Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan. It was translated from the Marathi original by Charles Philip Brown, an officer in the Madras Civil Service, and was first published in 1849. It is one of the few memoirs written by Indians from that period. In the style of Mir Hussain Ali Kirmani, this author also attempts to write a comprehensive history of the Mysore sultans, beginning with the advent of Haidar Ali and continuing up to Tipu Sultan's death in 1799 and the restoration of Krishnaraja Wodeyar III. However, he states only the bare facts in single statements without any ornamentation in the style of a chronicle. The manuscript of the work consisted of four books and was found in Tipu's library and was stored in the Madras

archives till its translation. In these four books, the author does not mention any details about himself. Also, he often tries to gloss over the failures of the Mysore rulers, thus giving a very confused account of the events with errors and anachronisms. In fact, the translator Brown has had to correct and annotate the text in several places. Nevertheless, it is important as one of the few memoirs by Indians during the 18th century and is useful for cross-checking with other sources while studying about this era.

A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sunnuds, Relating to India and the Neighbouring Countries, compiled by C.U. Aitchison, Vol. V, 1864

This work is a list compiled by the Government of India in the 1860s to keep a record of all the treaties and agreements signed between the British and the rulers of the Indian states from the time of the inception of the East India Company. The fifth volume in the series is an exhaustive listing of the treaties with the Marathas, the Nizam, Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan. It begins with the record of a treaty between the Nizam of Hyderabad and the Madras government against the French in 1759 (during the Third Carnatic War) and ends with a treaty between the British government and Coorg in 1834. The terms and stipulations of the treaties signed with the kingdom of Mysore from the peace treaty at Madras in 1769 to the treaty with the restored Wodeyar dynasty in 1799 are given. As it is a mere record and not a historical work, it contains very little background information to the treaties signed and the relevant circumstances. Nevertheless, this is a very useful source to learn about the diplomatic history of British India and about the terms and conditions agreed upon between the British and the Indians.

History of the Indian Navy (1613-1863), Vol. I, by Charles Rathbone Low, 1877

This is a work in two volumes and covers the seafaring activities of the British from the establishment of their factories on the coast of India in the early 1600s up to the reorganization of the Royal Indian Navy in 1863. The author provides summary descriptions of the naval battles as well as the trading missions undertaken first by the East India Company marine and later the British Navy in the Indian Ocean. As the title suggests, the work mainly concerns with the operation of the British fleets, especially against the French fleets during the Carnatic wars. But there are brief descriptions of the actions against Indian kingdoms such as the Marathas and Mysore. Hence, it is useful in corroborating other sources.

History of the Madras Army, Vol. I, by Lt. Col. W.J. Wilson, 1882

This is a work in three volumes written by a retired Colonel of the Madras army. It covers the period from the start of the Carnatic wars in the 1740s through the Bengal and Mysore wars in the 1760s and up to the 1880s. The author has examined the copious records in the Madras office for writing this work and as a result, it is mostly from the perspective of the British. There is also a description of the weapons and munitions available to the Madras army in this period and how it operated under the circumstances. There is also a chapter dedicated to the First Anglo-Mysore War of 1767-1769 though the concentration is on military affairs. As often happens with British writers, the author begins his account of the war with the invasion of the lower Carnatic by the alliance of Haidar Ali and the Nizam against the British forces while omitting actions such as the invasion of Mysore by the alliance of the Marathas, the Nizam and British as well as the seizure of Mysore territory by the British which happened earlier in the war. Also there is no discussion as to the background and the causes of the wars. But in spite of these lacunae, the book is a valuable source of information on the military affairs of the period. The book also brings to light a number of lesser conflicts taking place in the region like the rebellion of Mohammad Yusuf Khan in 1763 which was crushed by the Madras army. The first volume covers the period of the first Mysore War and ends with the start of the second Mysore war with the invasion of Carnatic Payanghat by Haidar Ali. It also contains several useful tables such as the list of soldiers' strength and the casualty list etc. There is a bibliography which is useful for further studies. Overall, the book is a very useful addition to the study of the period under scrutiny and gives the British officialdom's version of events.

The Decisive Battles of India: From 1746 to 1849 inclusive: With a portrait of the author, a map and three plans, by Colonel George Bruce Malleon, 1883

This is one of the seminal books written by the renowned military historian, G.B. Malleon about the major battles during the conquest of India by the British East India Company. The book begins with the battles of the Carnatic Wars and culminates in the Anglo-Sikh wars of the 1840s. In each chapter there is a lengthy discussion of the historical background leading up to the battle in question. The chapter regarding Mysore is titled 'Porto Novo' in which a brief account of the establishment of the Wodeyar kingdom is given followed quickly by the rise of Haidar Ali and his assumption of power. There follows a relatively short but very detailed account of the First Anglo-Mysore War which as usual is described with the focus on

the operations of the Madras Army. The Second Anglo-Mysore War is described more vividly with focus on the operations of commanders like Hector Munro and Eyre Coote. The chapter culminates in the battle of Porto Novo in which Coote defeated Haidar Ali which Malleson regards as having been decisive in checking the expansion of the Mysore Sultanate as from that point onwards the British were in the ascendant. Unusually, Malleson has a favourable opinion of Haidar Ali and describes him as “a man on genius, of energy, a born warrior” and feels that Mysore would not have fallen if Tipu had similar abilities. As Malleson has painstakingly gone through the British records, his work is a useful secondary source.

Vestiges of Old Madras, 1640-1800: Traced from East India Company's Records preserved at Fort St. George and The India Office, and from Other Sources, by Henry Davidson Love, Volume II, 1913

This is a history of the city of Madras written in four volumes by a British official named Colonel Henry Davidson Love as part of the India Records Series for the British government in 1913. Compiled using official records as well as private memoirs and correspondence, Love traces the history of the city from its acquisition as a village by the East India Company in 1640 up to the establishment of the Madras Presidency in 1800. The second volume deals with the Carnatic Wars as well as the First Anglo-Mysore War. Regarding the latter conflict, the volume contains descriptions of the raid on Madras by Tipu in 1767 as well as the final siege of Madras by Haidar Ali in 1769. As the volume contains the correspondence as well as memoirs of several British officials in Madras at this time, it is very useful as a contemporary account of the war and for examining the mood of the personnel in the administration and the army as the events in the war unfolded. As many of these letters and reports have been given verbatim, the volume is a good primary source for researching the history of the period. Also, there are descriptions of the fortifications and other building works which were in progress at the time as well as those undertaken due to the exigencies of war.

Report on the Palk Manuscripts: In the Possession of Mrs. Bannatyne of Haldon, Devon, compiled by Henry Davidson Love, 1922.

This is another volume compiled by Colonel H.D. Love for the India Records Series initiative of the British government. It contains the letters addressed to Robert Palk, the erstwhile governor of Madras and one of the main key figures in the formation of the triple alliance between the Marathas, the Nizam and the Madras government, mainly after his retirement to

England. Most of the letters are private correspondence and are not official documents. The correspondence begins in 1755 and culminates in 1787, and though mostly personal in nature, also describes contemporary events such as the Anglo-Mysore War in which several people known to Palk took part, including his nephew Thomas Palk. Also, there are eyewitness accounts of the happenings in Madras during this time. As a result, this volume is a very useful primary source to compare and corroborate with other documents, both official and unofficial, regarding the period under study.

Mysore Gazetteer, Vol. II, by C. Hayavadana Rao, 1927

This is the second volume of the Mysore Gazetteer as revised and edited by the eminent historian of Karnataka Conjeevaram Hayavadana Rao (after the first edition was brought out by B.L. Rice) and covers the history of the Carnatic region from the fall of the Vijayanagar Empire in 1565 through the rise of British power up to the end of the First World War which was contemporaneous to the lifetime of the author. Rao traces the rise of the Wodeyar dynasty of Mysore and continues through the usurpation of the kingdom by Haidar Ali and the rule of Tipu Sultan and the work culminates with the restoration of the Hindu dynasty. There is considerable information on the personal life and daily routine of the two Mysore rulers in the volume and little known facts such as that Haidar Ali signed with an inverted symbol of his name as he was illiterate are brought to light. In keeping with the British convention, Rao regards the First Anglo-Mysore war as having started with the invasion of the British territory by Mysore and does not regard the attack of the Marathas as being a part of the same conflict. But he attempts to do justice to the subjects of his study and evaluates their characters as described both by foreign historians like Wilks and Indian historians like Kirmani. In spite of being in the service of the state of Mysore, Rao paints Haidar Ali in a sympathetic light and includes the eulogies which writers such as Mark Wilks and Lewin B. Bowring have for him. He writes that Haidar Ali was tolerant ruler who did not discourage the Hindu religion within his domains. However, the book suffers from the familiar drawback of overreliance on British sources and relative neglect of indigenous sources. Nevertheless, the work represents a landmark in the history of Karnataka as it was the first compilation of the history of the region from ancient times to the modern era and it is indispensable material for anyone who is studying the history of the Deccan region, especially for the post-Vijayanagara period.

Hyder Ali's Fleet, by Surendra Nath Sen, published in Studies in Indian History, 1930

This research paper concerns Haidar Ali's attempts to establish a navy. The author has done a deep study of Portuguese records at Goa and has compared them to studies by British historians. He traces the desire of Haidar Ali to establish a fleet in order to expand contact with the outside world after his capture of Mangalore in 1763. The author goes on to describe how Haidar's initial attempt proved to be futile because he appointed an Englishman to command his fleet who deserted with the ships to Bombay during the First Anglo-Mysore War. Then he recounts how the Mysore ruler attempted to rebuild his fleet using Dutch help. This newly-built fleet was destroyed by the British navy during the Second Anglo-Mysore War and Haidar's death shortly afterwards led to Mysore's plans to have a maritime force being shelved.

Haidar Ali, 2 volumes, by Narendra Krishna Sinha, 1940

This is one of the major scholarly biographical studies of Haidar Ali and is the work of the scholar Narendra Krishna Sinha which was published in two volumes in 1940. In this work, the author gives an account of the life of Haidar Ali beginning with his ancestors and ending with his demise in 1782. The first volume covers the rise of Haidar Ali up to the Maratha war of 1770 and the later events are covered in the second volume. It is based on an exhaustive study of primary and contemporary sources along with comparison and correlation. Along with the standard British volumes, there is the study of Maratha documents from the Peshwa's Daftar as well as the study of Portuguese records gathered by the Goan historian P.S. Pissurlencar. Therefore, new ground is broken by elaborating on Haidar Ali's relations with other powers in India such as that of Travancore, Coorg and even the Portuguese which were seldom studied earlier. However, the author places greater emphasis on British sources and there is little reference to Kannada or other regional language sources in the volumes. Also, the author dwells mostly on the political history of Haidar Ali such as his military campaigns and neglects the administrative and economic aspects of his rule. There is little description of the personal life or habits of the ruler. Though it has been superseded by subsequent research, this work is very important in examining the political history of the Mysore kingdom in the late 1700s and contains a useful bibliographical list.

Selections from the Peshwa Daftar: The Karnatak Expeditions of Madhavrao I (1761-1772), ed. by G.S. Sardesai, 1934.

This volume is one in a series of compilations of the official records from the Peshwa Daftar by Govind S. Sardesai and is a valuable resource for the day-to-day affairs of the Maratha government of the Peshwa. The present volume deals exclusively with the southern expeditions of Peshwa Madhava Rao I between 1761 and his death in 1772. It contains records of letters written by the Peshwa as well as other officials and the balance sheets of the raiding expeditions that were conducted regularly. It also details the Maratha expeditions to the Deccan, particularly the wars between Haidar and Peshwa Madhava Rao and is a very useful primary source for examining the daily events that occurred during the course of the campaign and as such can be corroborated with other works. There are also the texts of several treaties agreed between the Marathas and other states which are very useful for historical studies.

British Relations with Haidar Ali (1760-1782) by B. Sheikh Ali, 1963

This is the first published book of historian and academician B. Sheikh Ali and is based on his thesis from the University of London which contains an exhaustive study of the official British records regarding dealings with the kingdom of Mysore from Haidar Ali's accession in 1760 to his death in 1782. The book covers new ground in that Haidar Ali's relations with the Bombay and to some extent Calcutta offices of the East India Company are also covered along with those of the Madras government. An example of the new information brought to light is that while the Madras government was hostile to Haidar Ali and his ambitions, the Bombay government on the other hand regarded the Mysore ruler as valuable trading partner with whom it kept commercial relations until the outbreak of war in 1767 and for some months beyond. Another relatively neglected area on which light is thrown is the relations between Haidar Ali and Mohammad Ali, the Nawab of Arcot. In Sheikh Ali's analysis, the Nawab was the main driving force for the anti-Haidar coalition formed during the Anglo-Mysore War of 1767-1769. Also, the treaties which ended the first and second Anglo-Mysore wars are discussed along with how they contributed to the outbreak of the next war. The main drawback of the book is that while Sheikh Ali has examined the British documents in detail, he has neglected to study similar documents of Mysore which might show a different perspective. But overall the book is an excellent source of data and analysis for the complex

diplomatic and political intrigues which were rife in India during the Carnatic and the Mysore wars.

Pre-British State System in South India: Mysore 1761-1799 by Nikhiles Guha, 1985

This is a landmark study of the administration of the Mysore Sultans by Nikhiles Guha, one of the foremost experts on the history of Mysore. The book explains the administrative changes introduced into the Mysore government from the ascension of Haidar Ali in 1761 up to the demise of Tipu in 1799. It starts with a study of the economic affairs such as the trade and commerce of Mysore existing at the time of Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan. There is a separate chapter on the Mysore army which describes the various divisions and battalions in the army along with the weapons used. After his rise to power, Haidar Ali seems to have initiated a reorganization of his forces by inducting French and Portuguese mercenaries into his army, a development which alarmed the British who viewed them as hostile powers. Unlike contemporary Indian rulers, Haidar Ali set up a regular infantry division in his army which was well regarded by outsiders such as Clive and Lawrence. He even set up a navy consisting of several boats manned by Mappila Muslims after his conquest of the Malabar Coast. The final chapter describes how the two rulers managed to impress their power on the state while maintaining the fiction of the Wodeyar king. Haidar Ali was content to call himself the *Sarvadhikari* i.e. the Chief Minister of the state while Tipu appropriated the title of sultan. However, both considered the people to be loyal to the Wodeyars and so the continued with the Dusshera celebrations to assuage the public and maintain their authority. Thus the book is an invaluable study of the administrative and economic life of the kingdom of Mysore.

The New Cambridge History India: Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire by C.A. Bayly, 1990.

This is a study by C.A. Bayly of the rise of the British empire and how Indian society responded to it. It covers the first century of British expansion in India starting in the 1750s up to the Sikh wars of the 1840s. It studies the condition of the Indian states in the eighteenth century and also describes the corresponding strengths of the European establishments and their methods of waging war. It also covers resistance to colonial expansion by Indian regional powers such as Mysore, the Marathas and the Sikhs. It also contains a glossary section and has several references which are useful for further research in the areas. Thus, it is an important work for the period under study.

Societies and Military Power: India and its Armies by Stephen Peter Rosen, 1996.

This is a recent study and analysis of the relationship between the armed forces and the society in general and how the two influence each other. The book covers a period from ancient India to the post-Independence era, thus making it one of the few works on Indian history after 1947. The author draws a comparison between the societies of India and Europe in the past as well as the present with respect to their ability to produce professional standing armies. He said that the main reason for British success in India was not only the technological superiority but also the fact that due to social divisions the Indian armies were not capable of being disciplined and coordinated while the British army was well-trained and could adapt to the situation. He attributes the present-day efficacy of the Indian army to the methods of training and discipline brought by the British rulers.

Military Developments in India: 1750 to 1850 by Pradeep Barua, Journal of Military History, Vol. 58, No. 4, October 1994, pp. 599-616.

This research article was written by Pradeep P. Barua, one of the foremost military historians of South Asia. In this essay, Barua studies the cases of three regional powers in India, Mysore, the Marathas and the Sikhs with respect to their conflict with, and ultimate defeat by, the British. He says that the initial setbacks suffered by the British against these local rulers were because people like Haidar Ali, Tipu Sultan and Mahadaji Scindia were able to utilize their cavalry effectively while the East India Company was deficient in this particular field. Barua propounds his thesis that the ultimate success of the British was not only due to their technological superiority but also because of their ability to adapt to the Indian conditions and thus undergo the necessary changes depending on the situation. It was only after Cornwallis hired a corps of Maratha cavalry that he was able to defeat Tipu Sultan in the Third Mysore War.

Tipu's Search for Legitimacy: Islam and Kingship in a Hindu Domain by Kate Brittlebank, 1997.

This is a recent scholarly study on the kingdom of Mysore under Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan. It focusses on the interaction between the rulers and the subjects in Mysore and thus is very useful for understanding the situation during the 18th century. The context of the period is examined using recent works on ethnohistory such as those of Nicholas Dirks and C.A. Bayly. The book examines how Haidar Ali and Tipu used the existing Hindu and Muslim

ceremonies and iconographies such as the Dusshera festival in order to overawe the people as well as to inspire respect from them which would cement their position as the de-facto rulers. One of the important aspects of the book is the extensive use of primary sources. By focusing on the interaction between the rulers and the subjects in Mysore, this book is very useful for understanding the situation during the 18th century. There is also an exhaustive bibliography of primary sources which will be very useful for future research.

A Military History of Medieval India by Gurcharan Singh Sandhu, 2003.

This book by a retired Major General in the Indian army contains a study of wars and battles in India from the time Mahmud Ghaznavi's invasion in the 11th century to the Third Battle of Panipat in 1761. It is written mainly from the military perspective though a great deal of historical background is included. It contains an extensive study of the strategy and tactics used in the battles of kingdoms such as the Rajputs and the Mughals as well as South Indian kingdoms such as Vijayanagara and the Cholas along with the names of the principal commanders and warriors taking part in the battle. Also given is an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the opposing sides with the focus on why events turned out the way they did. There are entire chapters devoted to the tactics of the cavalry warfare practised by the Peshwas in the 18th century, which were later used in the wars against Mysore. There is also a description of the method of recruitment of men and horses for use in battle. Thus the book is a very useful study for the military historian in order to get a sense of warfare, such as cavalry tactics, in medieval India which was continued by local Indian rulers such as Madhava Rao and Haidar Ali in India of the 1700s. It also contains an extensive bibliography for further studies on the subject.

The State at War in South Asia by Pradeep P. Barua, 2005.

In this book, Pradeep Barua lists out all the recorded conflicts in South Asian history, from the military technology of prehistoric India through ancient and medieval periods up to the late 20th century. The wars before the 1700s are barely touched upon; but greater detail is given on the colonial warfare in the subcontinent which involved the British, French and Indian powers but the wars involving the Portuguese and the Dutch are not mentioned at all nor those involving states such as the Rajputs and Vijayanagar. The most unique feature of the book is that it includes a history of the wars fought by independent India and an analysis of the nuclear dimension. Also included is a chapter on the Anglo-Mysore wars in which the military capability of the Mysore kingdom is compared to that of the East India Company.

The wars and the tactics used are described in some detail. In his analysis, Barua says that as long as the Mysore army stuck to its traditional cavalry tactics it prevailed over the British. But after Tipu started moving over to European-style tactics, the army lost its efficacy and was ultimately defeated in 1799. This is a useful work to understand the military tactics then prevalent.

Military Synthesis in South Asia: Armies, Warfare and Indian Society, c. 1740-1849 by Kaushik Roy, *The Journal of Military History*, Vol. 69, No. 3, July 2005, pp. 651-690.

This is an article written by Kaushik Roy, one of the leading military historians of India, in which he places the wars involving the British in India within the context of the larger military and commercial revolutions which had taken place in Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries. It begins with a description of the Military Revolution in Europe of the 1500s which involved infantry squares supported by artillery which is then compared to the traditional cavalry tactics of approaching and withdrawing practised by the Indians. According to him, in the Mughal era, European powers such as the British and the Portuguese had been defeated by the local rulers. But after the disintegration of the Mughal empire, the local Indian potentates lacked the resources and the manpower to create large standing armies and thus still relied on feudal levies and mercenaries to do most of the fighting. But the military and commercial revolutions in Europe enabled the British to maintain large armies and fight protracted battles which managed to overwhelm uncoordinated Indian armies once their resources had been exhausted. He concludes that the combination of these factors took place only in the 18th and 19th centuries which was vital for colonization to occur.

The Splendours of Royal Mysore: The Untold Story of the Wodeyars by Vikram Sampath, 2008.

This book by Vikram Sampath is one of the most recent works on the history of Mysore written for a general audience. It covers the history of the Wodeyars from the beginning of the dynasty in the 14th century and concludes with the ceremonial role of the dynasty in the 21st century. The author has collected data from a number of sources in this book including Indian and foreign authors as well as primary and secondary sources. The book traces the rise of Haidar Ali and his assumption of power and his rule up to his death; and then the story continues with Tipu till his downfall and demise. As the story is primarily about the Mysore royal family, there is a tendency to deprecate Haidar Ali and his son Tipu Sultan. But there are detailed narratives about the Anglo-Mysore Wars with an analysis of the principal events

and the commanders involved. Also, there are excellent character studies done of the historical personages in the book. The writer goes to great lengths to examine popular legends and presents all sides of the historical argument. One weakness of the book is that there are no references for the statements given. But there is an extensive bibliography which can be used for further research. Overall, the book is very good as an introduction to the subject under study.

War, Culture And Society in Early Modern South Asia, 1740-1849, by Kaushik Roy, 2011

In this work, Roy analyzes the Military Revolution thesis of Geoffrey Parker et al. in the South Asian context. He takes the concepts of the superiority of European military technology and tactics expounded by historians such as Geoffrey Parker and Jeremy Black etc. and applies them to the various conflicts in eighteenth and nineteenth century India such as the Mysore and the Maratha wars. According to Roy, the Indian powers did endeavour to modernize and upgrade their armies but their failure to provide the appropriate institutions for their maintenance led to their disintegration. In sequence, he studies the naval supremacy of the Europeans such as the British and the French, the weakness of the army of the later Mughals, the increasing power of the East India Company and finally its wars with Mysore, the Marathas and the Sikhs. He gives an account of the relative strengths of each of the parties in terms of finance and equipment and concludes that the transitions from outmoded forms of warfare to the ones demanded by the situation on hand were gradual and the results were by no means a foregone conclusion. Roy effectively argues against the British claim that they had an easy conquest of India due to their superior arms. The author has made an extensive study of the scholarly secondary sources on the subject and uses them effectively to put forward his hypothesis. However, the book's main drawback is the lack of reference to primary sources which could have strengthened his argument by offering eyewitness accounts.

Scheme of Chapterization

The present research thesis is divided into six chapters. They are as follows:

Chapter I: Introduction

The Introduction forms the first chapter of the research work. It provides a clear statement on the research problem undertaken. It also endeavours to locate the historical significance of the

First Anglo-Mysore War, which has hitherto been neglected by historians. It presents the aims and objectives of the research work with the inclusion of a note on the limitations and the shortcomings of the study. It spells out the research methodology followed in the study. It also deals with the hypotheses with a detailed focus on the review of literature on the research problem. It presents an outline of the chapterization, which is followed in the research work.

Chapter II: Prelude to the War: Haidar Ali's Relations with Contemporary Powers up to 1767

The second chapter covers the background to the First Anglo-Mysore War of 1767-1769 and the events and the complex politics leading to the conflict. It traces the rise of Haidar Ali from being a cavalry leader to becoming the commander-in-chief of the army and his ultimate assumption of power in the kingdom of Mysore. It describes the ancestry and family of Haidar situated within the historical context of the 18th century. It then describes the birth and orphaning of Haidar Ali as well as his arrival along with his brother at the court of Mysore. Then his training and his enlistment in the army are described followed by his combat experiences wherein he observed directly the western tactics of the French. It is shown how these battles contributed to his accumulation of power along with his attempts to set a European-trained corps in his army. Next comes his seizing power in quick succession from the *Dalavayi* and then the king of Mysore. Then there is a description and analysis of his administrative and military reforms along with a glimpse of his personal habits. The chapter also covers his relations with the neighbouring powers like the Marathas, the Nizam of Hyderabad and the British governments in Madras and Bombay. The expansion of the kingdom of Mysore is studied along with the conflicts with the Polygars and the chiefs of Malabar as well as the aforementioned powers. The chapter culminates with the formation of the hostile triple alliance between the Maratha Peshwa, the Nizam and the governor of Madras against Haidar Ali which set the stage for the First Anglo-Mysore War. It includes a section on the military technology of the era as well as the strengths and weaknesses of each side along with the equipment used and a geographical description of the theatre of the war

Chapter III: The Opening Phase of the War: The Marathas, the Nizam and the Madras Army attack Mysore

The third chapter covers the first year of the war from January 1767 to December 1767. It commences with a description of the initial invasion launched by the Marathas and the

defection of Haidar Ali's brother-in-law Mir Ali Raza Khan to their side as well as the attempts to invade the Mysore territories by their allies i.e. Nizam and the British. It also covers the immediate reaction to the invasion by Haidar Ali. There is also a description and analysis of the various military tactics and manoeuvres and counter-manoevres of the opposing armies on the field. This is followed by an account of how Haidar Ali succeeded in breaking the hostile alliance and how the Marathas withdrew from Mysore; and then of Haidar allying with the Nizam to invade the Carnatic-Payanghat in order to regain territory captured by the British. The manoeuvres of the combined armies of Mysore and Hyderabad at battles like Krishnagiri and Kaveripuiram are presented along with the British reactions. It then dwells on the reverses suffered by the allies at the hands of Colonel Smith and Lieutenant-Colonel Wood of the Madras army in battles such as Changama and Thiruvannamalai which ultimately forced the return of the Nizam to his capital city. Finally, the chapter concludes with a description of Haidar Ali's withdrawal from the Carnatic to his home territories of Mysore along with an analysis of the events that occurred throughout the year and examining the position of each of the parties involved.

Chapter IV: The Middle Phase of the War: Diplomatic Initiatives, the Withdrawal of the Nizam and the Renewed British Offensive Against Mysore

The fourth chapter covers the second year of the war from January 1768 to December 1768. It consists of two parts. The first part starts with the renewed invasion of the territories of Hyderabad and Mysore by the British forces which comprised not only of the Madras Army in the south but also the Bombay Army on the western coast and the Bengal Army on the eastern. It covers the attack on the Nizam's territories by a detachment of the Bengal Army which led to the signing of a peace treaty between the Nizam and the British. It was followed by a fresh declaration of war against Haidar Ali and the state of Mysore. The section then covers the seizure of the port of Mangalore and adjacent territories by the Bombay Army and the offensive in the Carnatic by the Madras Army which led to the seizure of Mysore territories such as Coimbatore and Dindigul leading to the crossing of the junction of the Eastern and Western Ghats and the capture of territories such as Hoskote and Kolar. The second part of the chapter describes the recapture of Mangalore by the Mysore army in the middle of the year followed by the counter-offensive of Haidar Ali into the Carnatic and his recapture of the territories lost earlier in the year. The chapter concludes with a retrospective analysis of the events of the second year of the war with a focus on which side had the upper hand and emerged in a stronger position.

Chapter V: The Closing Phase of the War: Peace Negotiations, the Resumption of Hostilities and the Treaty of Madras

The fifth chapter covers the last stage of the war which is the period from January 1769 to April 1769. It describes the breakdown of peace negotiations and the renewal of hostilities between Haidar Ali and the Madras government in the Carnatic with the associated movements and counter movements between Haidar and Colonel Smith. This is followed by an account of how Haidar Ali set up a lightly-armed flying column comprising of picked troops with which he outflanked Smith's division and laid siege directly to Madras which lay undefended. Then there is a description of the deliberations that occurred within the Council of Madras followed by negotiations between Josias Du Pre, the Second in the Council, and Haidar Ali which led to a cessation of hostilities and the signing of the Treaty of Madras which effectively restored the *status quo ante bellum* after which the Mysore ruler returned to his dominions. The gains and losses to each side from the conflict and how it influenced their future courses of action are analysed. The terms of the Treaty of Madras are examined in detail, in particular the mutual defensive pact that was agreed upon; and the aftermath of the war is described and analysed in retrospect.

Chapter VI: Conclusion

The sixth chapter is the final and concluding chapter of the research work. It starts with explaining why the study of the First Anglo-Mysore War is important in Indian historiography. The findings of the research study are then listed out and then the analysis of the war from several perspectives and its impact on the history of India are presented. A comparative study is drawn of Haidar Ali's strategy and tactics with other comparable rulers of the 18th century in order to identify his strengths and weaknesses as a military commander. It is seen that while Haidar was an outstanding military tactician, he lacked the strategic foresight to exploit his victories for long-term gains. The chapter concludes with a summary of the research study.

Chapter II

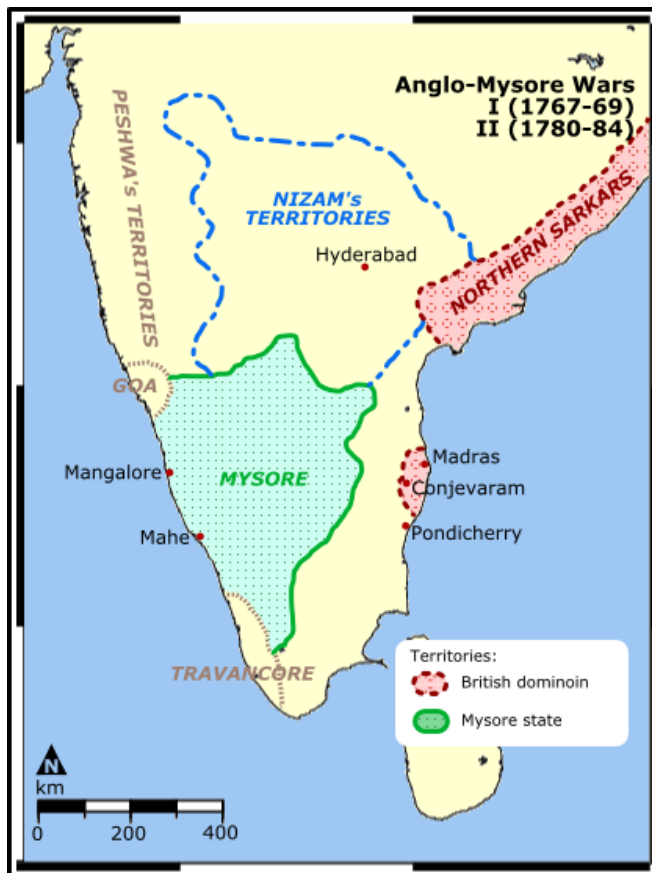
PRELUDE TO THE WAR: HAIDAR ALI'S RELATIONS WITH CONTEMPORARY POWERS UP TO 1767

The decline of the Mughal Empire in the early eighteenth century marked the beginning of a tumultuous era in the history of India. With the demise of Bahadur Shah I, the Mughal emperors in Delhi became puppet rulers in the hands of ambitious nobles. The various governors and noblemen of the empire such as Murshid Quli Khan in Bengal, Shuja-ud-Daulah in Awadh and the Nizam-ul-Mulk in the Deccan became independent in all but name. Often these rulers felt it their right and privilege to expand their dominions across neighbouring states and beyond, both for personal aggrandizement as well as plunder, often with the force of arms being the sole condition for legitimacy which resulted in the land plunging into chaos by rulers and power brokers competing for supremacy. Northern India was being split apart by the rivalries of both the vestiges of the Mughals - the Rajputs, the Nawabs of Awadh and Bengal and the Sikhs; and external invaders - the Persians under Nadir Shah and the Afghans under Ahmad Shah Abdali.

The situation was no different in peninsular India. Here the dominant force was the Maratha Peshwa who had overshadowed the Maratha Chhatrapati as the ruler of the empire. Other major rulers included the Nizam of Hyderabad who claimed the title of Viceroy of the Mughal emperor in the Deccan, and less powerful kingdoms such as Mysore, Arcot and Thanjavur. The situation was so fluid that alliances were made and broken with equal rapidity. On any given day, rulers who were allied previously could be fighting each other and then again reconciling against a third party the next day. Further complicating the situation in the south was the presence of European powers *viz.*, the British and the French East India Companies which decided to involve themselves in the local conflicts, not only to protect their establishments and privileges but also to expand their power directly or indirectly, bringing their modern armies and equipment into the fray and moreover playing off one Indian ruler against another¹.

In such an unsettled state of affairs, a bold and enterprising man with a strategic vision could accumulate great power and wealth and become a ruler of a sizable area. In the 1700s, there

¹ C.A. Bayly, *The New Cambridge History of India: Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire*, CUP, Cambridge, 2008, p. 48.



Left: Map showing the political states in peninsular India during the First Anglo-Mysore War. Source: University of Pennsylvania. <http://www.history.upenn.edu/coursepages/hist086/material/schmidt33a.jpg> (accessed on February 10, 2016).



Above: Map showing the political divisions in South India at the time of the war of 1767-1769. The areas marked in yellow show the contested zones, the control of which changed hands from time to time. Published in Mark Wilks, *HISTORICAL SKETCHES*, originally published by Colin Mackenzie. Source: <https://archive.org/stream/historicalskec01wilk#page/n7/mode/2up>, (accessed on February 6, 2016).

was no shortage of such adventurers seeking fame and fortune in India from within the subcontinent and from foreign areas like Europe and beyond. Warriors like Baji Rao I, Alivardi Khan and Ranjit Singh became powerful rulers in their own right. One of the most successful warlords was Haidar Ali, who rose from being a humble troop commander to becoming the *Sarvadhikari* (chief minister) of the kingdom of Mysore and the de-facto ruler of that state, expanding it into one of the important states of early modern India. Using both traditional Indian as well as westernized military techniques, Haidar Ali could fight not only the indigenous potentates such as the Marathas and the Nizam but also the British government at Madras and could not only hold his own against them but also extend his territory. Thus, Mysore would remain a formidable obstacle to European expansion in the Deccan till the final defeat and death of Haidar Ali's son Tipu Sultan in 1799 and the extinction of his dynasty, which sealed British supremacy in the whole of South India.

The Geography of the lower Deccan

The Deccan Plateau is the most prominent geographical feature of southern India. This flat tableland is flanked on the west and the east by the mountain ranges called the Western Ghats and the Eastern Ghats respectively. These mountains cut off the plateau from the western and eastern coasts. Ultimately, both the ranges converge and taper along the Nilgiri Hills. But isolated hilly areas are found all the way up to the Kanyakumari coastal tip of India. Sloping from west to east, the Deccan Plateau contains many major rivers such as the Tungabhadra, the Krishna, the Godavari and the Kaveri which form huge deltas before they enter the Bay of Bengal. Since the conquest of the region in the late seventeenth century by the Mughals, the region had been divided into the *Carnatic Hyderabad* and the *Carnatic Bijapur* regions². The Carnatic Hyderabad region lay along the Eastern Ghats and comprised the holdings of the Nizam of Hyderabad which included places like Ganjikota, Gooty and Khammam. The Carnatic Bijapur region lay along the Western Ghats and included Mysore, Coorg and Chitradurga. Together the whole region was known simply as the Carnatic.

For administrative convenience, the Carnatic was later classified into the *Carnatic Balaghat* and the *Carnatic Payanghat* (written in English records as *Balaghaut* and *Payeen Ghaut* respectively)³. The Balaghat region comprised the upland of the Deccan north of the Nilgiri

²Mark Wilks, *Historical Sketches Of The South Of India In An Attempt To Trace The History Of Mysoor*, Vol. I, Longman, Hurst, Rees and Orme, London, 1810, p. 218.

³Ibid; B. Lewis Rice, *Mysore: A Gazetteer Compiled for the Government*, Woodfall and Kinder, London, 1890, p. 359.

Hills and included the whole of earlier division of Carnatic Bijapur and extended from Guntur south of the Tungabhadra to the Kaveri delta near Madras. The Payanghat region comprised the whole of the Tamil country south of the Kaveri and included important urban centres such as Gingee, Thanjavur and Vellore. The relatively flat terrain of both the Balaghat and Payanghat regions made it ideal for the cavalry manoeuvres practised by the Indian armies of that time. The scrubland provided fodder for the horses while the rivers and streams provided water. The Nilgiri and the Satyamangalam Hills form a formidable natural barrier between the Balaghat and Payanghat regions. However, the hills are intersected by a series of passes which contain relatively low-lying level land. These passes, which extend for 30 km from the Nilgiris to the Kaveri basin, are collectively known as the Palakkad Gap (also known as Palghat Gap). For centuries, this was the only route for the passage of traders and armies through the junction of the Ghats into the plains of southern India. As a result, it assumed great political and strategic importance. So a number of forts had been set up at key locations to control the passes, the important ones being Krishnagiri, Vaniyambadi, Dharmapuri, etc.

The Rise of Haidar Ali

Haidar Ali Khan did not originally belong to the local warrior gentry of Mysore. His family on both the paternal and maternal sides hailed from external regions. Though the court historians of Srirangapatna claim that his ancestors hailed from Arabia, the earliest member of the family who could be traced was his great-grandfather Mohammad Bahlol⁴. According to Kirmani, who is partially corroborated by Wilks, Mohammad Bahlol hailed from the region of Delhi and settled in Aland in the Gulbarga region as a religious preacher during the reign of Sultan Mohammad Adil Shah in the mid-1600s⁵. He had two sons Mohammad Ali and Mohammed Wali. Early in life, these two brothers took up service as tax collectors under the Nawab of Sira and later settled in Kolar. While living in Sira, Mohammad Ali had four sons of whom the youngest was named Fateh Mohammad⁶. After Ali's death, his brother Wali seized all his property and cast the former's family from the home.

Therefore, Ali's four sons had to make their individual fortunes. One of the *Nayaks* (commanders) in the service of the Nawab of Sira took the family under his protection and

⁴ Wilks, Vol. I, p. 240.

⁵ Mir Hussain Ali Kirmani, *The History Of Hydrabad Naik*, trans. Col. W. Miles, W.H. Allen and Co., London, 1842, p. 1; Wilks, Vol. I, p. 240.

⁶ Kirmani, *History*, p. 4.

enrolled the sons as soldiers under his command when they came of age⁷. Fateh Mohammad distinguished himself as a soldier and advanced in rank and station under the Nawab and eventually commanded a troop of 50 cavalry and 1400 infantry and received the rank of *faujdar* (commander of a fort) and the town of Budikote as his *jagir* (fief). Unusually for his time, Fateh Mohammad seems to have been monogamous in his matrimonial affairs. His first wife, from Kolar, died young after bearing him three sons. His second wife was the daughter of a Nawayat, i.e. a Muslim of Arab descent from the Malabar coast, who died without bearing an issue. He then married the younger sister of his deceased second wife who bore him two sons- Shahbaz and Haidar Ali⁸.

Haidar Ali was born in his father's *jagir* at Budikote in the year 1721. In 1729, his father Fateh Mohammad and his eldest brother, along with the Nawab, died in a skirmish with a neighbouring warlord. Mohammad had left his family and relations at Doddaballapur as hostages of his ruler. This was common during the time as detaining the families of the subordinate commanders by the overlord before a battle would prevent their desertion to a rival warlord due to threats or inducements. With Fateh Mohammad's death, his family members fell into the hands of a rival Nawab who did not extend any security to them. The brothers Shahbaz and Haidar Ali were tortured in order to extract as much money as possible from them. A few months later they were released after which they made their way along with their mother to Bangalore to take refuge with her brother Ibrahim who was a Nayak under the king of Mysore⁹.

These early adversities seem to have played an important role in moulding the character of Haidar Ali as seen in his taking revenge on his torturers some years later¹⁰. The family's travails prevented him from getting an education at an early age and in later life he showed no inclination for it. Therefore he remained unlettered throughout his life. As an adolescent, he was given more to the pleasures of the hunt and other games than to the discipline of a military life and hence would spend weeks altogether hunting in the forest or on other amusements¹¹. Also, he seems to have developed a great affinity for the opposite sex which he would retain throughout his life resulting in his large seraglio. In the meantime, after

⁷Wilks, Vol. I, p. 241.

⁸Ibid, pp. 242-244; Narendra Krishna Sinha, *Haidar Ali*, S.C. Sarkar & Sons Ltd., Calcutta, 1941, p. 2.

⁹C. Hayavadana Rao, *Mysore Gazetteer*, Vol. II, Government Press, Karnataka, 2005, pp. 2469-70; N.K. Sinha, p. 2.

¹⁰Wilks, Vol. I, p. 246; G.B. Malleson, *The Decisive Battles of India: From 1746 to 1849 Inclusive*, W.H. Allen & Co., London, 1883, p. 213.

¹¹Wilks, Vol. I, p. 247.

coming of age, his brother Shahbaz was enrolled as a junior officer under the command of his uncle Ibrahim. He distinguished himself in battle and became a Nayak commanding a troop of two hundred horse and one thousand foot soldiers at the time of the siege of Devanahalli where his younger brother Haidar Ali would first taste combat¹². He eventually earned the title *Meer Ismael* under which he is referred to in the account of Maistre de la Tour¹³. This French writer went so far as to say that he was the first Indian to form an army of sepoys armed with flintlock muskets equipped with bayonets¹⁴. This seems an exaggeration as there is no mention of this in other sources.

Taking the example of his brother and other soldiers of fortune of the time, Haidar Ali also decided upon a career as a soldier and was enrolled as a voluntary horseman in his brother's troop. It was in 1749 that he first gained prominence at twenty seven years of age¹⁵. That year Nanjaraja, the *Dalavayi* (commander-in-chief) of the Mysore army, and also the power behind the throne, was conducting a siege of the town of Devanahalli in order to suppress its rebellious Polygar. The semi-independent chieftains in peninsular India were usually called *Polygars* after the use of the term *palayagararu* for the feudatories of the Vijayanagara Empire. During the siege of Devanahalli, Haidar Ali would lead small storming parties of infantry towards the breaches made in the fort. He gained the reputation of a daring and shrewd soldier, leading from the front with uncommon self-assurance and being unmindful of danger. This brought him to the notice of Nanjaraja. At the end of the campaign, he appointed Haidar Ali as commander of a troop of 50 horse and 200 infantry (Robson gave a figure of 500 infantry and 200 cavalry but Punganuri agreed with the former figure)¹⁶. He was free to increase his contingent with the levy of irregulars from the peasantry and through mercenaries with his share of the booty received. He was also made responsible for guarding of the gates of Devanahalli¹⁷. This town would become Haidar's fixed establishment where his son Tipu would be born.

¹²Wilks, Vol. I, p. 247.

¹³ Maistre de La Tour (hereafter M.M.D.L.T.), *THE HISTORY OF HYDER SHAH ALIAS HYDER ALI KHAN BAHADUR*, J. Johnson, London, 1784, p. 34; Francis Robson, *The Life of Hyder Ally: With an Account of His Usurpation of the Kingdom of Mysore*, S. Hooper, London, 1786, p. 8.

¹⁴M.M.D.L.T., p. 35.

¹⁵ J.W. Fortescue, *A History of the British Army*, Vol. III, Macmillan & Co., London, 1911, p. 113.

¹⁶Ram Chandra Rao 'Punganuri', *MEMOIRS OF HYDER AND TIPPOO, RULERS OF SERINGAPATAM, WRITTEN IN THE MARATHA LANGUAGE*, trans. by Charles Philip Brown, Book II, Advertiser Press, Madras, 1849, p. 2; Robson, pp. 9-10; Wilks, p. 248.

¹⁷Wilks, Vol. I, p. 248.



Left: Haidar Ali, Engraving on Steel by C. Morrish. Source: Maistre De La Tour, *History of Hyder Shah*. 1784, page viii.



Above: Plaque in the fort of Budikote commemorating the birthplace of Haidar Ali. Source: <http://wikimapia.org/31993288/Hyder-ali-Birth-Place-Budi-Kote-Bangarpet-Taluk-Kolar-Dist-Karnataka> (accessed on February 20, 2016).

He was soon called upon on his next mission which was in the struggle for the throne of Hyderabad between Nasir Jung and Muzaffar Jung in 1750 after the death of the Nizam-ul-Mulk. The Mysore army, which included the contingents of Shahbaz and Haidar Ali, was allied with Nasir Jung. The protracted conflict proved to be a good training ground for the skills of the young Haidar. It was here that he could observe not only the traditional Indian warfare but also the European style practised by the French detachment sent from Pondicherry that was supporting the faction of Muzaffar Jung. When Nasir Jung was killed in 1751, his army began to flee the battlefield. In the confusion that followed, Haidar's camp followers, a group of 300 men of the Bedar community who specialized in plunder, seized several camel loads of treasure which they conveyed to their lord at Devanahalli. He had also managed to collect 300 horses and 500 matchlocks from the battlefield¹⁸. This indicated a strong sense of discipline and loyalty among Haidar's men in that instead of absconding with the treasure, they chose to surrender it to their overlord.

These new resources would go a long way in augmenting Haidar Ali's power as he could further enlarge his private army by recruiting more men offering higher salaries. Since the late Mughal times, the army of a kingdom consisted of several self-contained units of individual commanders rather than a central force organized by the state. The formation and training of armies came almost entirely under the purview of individual commanders. Using the promise of handsome pay and perks, a Nayak could enlist volunteers into his force or, on occasion, even conscript a larger force of levies from the lands surrounding his fief, and often without any check by his superior or the state. These levies included people from all social levels, including outcastes; and the unit of each caste would have its own leader from that group¹⁹. The senior commanders and the rulers would acquiesce in this practice as fresh troops were always needed during the uncertain times; but this would result in the recruits being more loyal to the Nayak in question than the ruler or the state and would thus augment his power. The pattern was set which Haidar would follow in his future wars where he would always look towards gaining the maximum profit from the enterprise.

There was an important event associated with the battle of Hyderabad which would set the future course of Haidar Ali's actions. He was particularly impressed by the discipline and training of the contingent of 800 Frenchmen and 4000 sepoys sent by Dupleix which attacked the 300,000-strong army of Nasir Jung with great skill and daring. This event, though barely

¹⁸Wilks, Vol. I, pp. 267-268; Kirmani, p. 30; Robson, p. 10.

¹⁹ Stephen Peter Rosen, *Societies and Military Power: India and Its Armies*, OUP, Delhi, 1996, p. 174.

mentioned in the account of Wilks, is explored more elaborately in the account of Maistre De La Tour, a French mercenary who joined Haidar's army in the 1760s. He claims that Haidar Ali followed Muzaffar Jung to Pondicherry where he was impressed by the arts, sciences and architecture of the French which marked the start of his lifelong predisposition towards them²⁰. But it is certain that he informed his brother Shahbaz of the superiority of the European arms and equipment to the locally manufactured weapons in Mysore. The latter sent a Parsi emissary to Bombay, which had good trading relations with Mysore, who succeeded in buying two thousand muskets and six cannon for the troops of Shahbaz and Haidar Ali²¹. He also enlisted 30 European sailors, mostly of French origin, from Malabar into the Mysore army to serve as gunners for the cannon. Thus Mysore became the first regional state to have troops armed with muskets and bayonets along with a contingent of Europeans manning the artillery²².

Hardly had this campaign ended when another began which would be of cardinal importance. In 1751 there was the contest between Mohammad Ali Khan and Chanda Sahib for the position of the Nawab of Arcot. The former was backed by the British and the latter by the French. Mohammad Ali applied to Mysore for support, promising Tiruchirapalli and the associated lands in exchange. This would have included territory belonging to the Madras government, which was nominally subject to the Nawab of Arcot, as well. Despite reservations from the king of Mysore and a number of ministers, Nanjaraja was dazzled by the opportunity and led an army of 5000 horse and 10,000 foot to join the forces of Mohammad Ali. It consisted mostly of irregular levies and the only professional force in it was Haidar Ali's contingent armed with the newly acquired muskets²³. Mohammad Ali also called on the support of Murari Rao Ghorpade, the Maratha chief of Gooty (not to be confused with Gutti in Karnataka), and the British. But before heavy fighting began, Chanda Sahib was killed by the Thanjavur forces in 1752²⁴. At the same time the British had strengthened their hold on Mohammad Ali²⁵. They lent him huge sums of money and effectively made him beholden to them²⁶.

²⁰ M.M.D.L.T., p. 35; Fortescue, p. 113.

²¹ C.A. Bayly, p. 62.

²² M.M.D.L.T., pp. 34-35; Malleon, p. 214.

²³ Hayavadana Rao, *Mysore Gazetteer*, p. 2471.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ C.A. Bayly, p. 45.

²⁶ Ibid, p. 59.

As he now had no need of the Mysore troops and fearful of angering the British government at Madras, on whose forces he relied to stay in power, Mohammad Ali reneged on his promise to surrender Thiruchirapalli to Nanjaraja. Angered by this, the latter allied with the French troops sent by Dupleix and began a three-year siege of the fort. The Nawab had the support of the British which he used against the Mysoreans. In the ineffective operations that followed which drained Mysore's resources, Haidar Ali took the opportunity to further increase his own resources through the acquisition of guns and booty from the battles²⁷. In the course of siege, Haidar Ali developed a rivalry with Hari Singh, another commander in the Mysore army who viewed him as an interloper who claimed credit for the other's victories²⁸. As his forces could not be used in a siege, Haidar led his cavalry contingents to attack the baggage trains of the British. In one raid against Major Stringer Lawrence, the commander of the British troops, he seized thirty five cartloads of provisions²⁹. Robert Orme described him as the best commander of Mysorean troops in the battlefield³⁰. Oddly, Haidar Ali's court historian Kirmani was very reticent about the happenings near Thiruchirappalli. According to him, Nanjaraja took Haidar's advice to retreat to Satyamangalam, which was not the case as would be seen in due course³¹. This was most probably because the whole affair turned out to be a disaster for the Mysore army and hence Haidar Ali was reluctant to think about it.

During the siege of Thiruchirappalli, in each of his raids, Haidar Ali would keep a portion of the seized goods for himself and augment his army with it. It was at this time that the French started taking notice of the young cavalry commander who was called by them *Andernec* (Haidar Nayak)³². Haidar was positioned on the left wing of the Mysore army which was a position of honour and was located to the right of the French troops. He was impressed by the daily drilling of troops practiced in the European camp. Through the offer of higher pay, he enlisted a number of Frenchmen into his army and had them drill his army in their tactics. Also, a number of them were sent to his brother in Mysore to drill his forces³³. However,

²⁷ Note: Looting and plundering were accepted practices by the armies of the day. In general, the British claimed to be an exception to this. But the British army had appointed Prize Agents to collect the plunder after the battle and distribute it among the troops. See *Bengal and Madras Papers, Vol. III, 1757-1795*, Imperial Record Department, Calcutta, Government of India, 1928, p. 536; James L. Hevia, *English Lessons: The Pedagogy of Imperialism in Nineteenth-Century China*, DUP, London, 2003, p. 83.

²⁸ Wilks, Vol. I, p. 321-22.

²⁹ Ibid, p. 354; Robson, p. 10.

³⁰ N.K. Sinha, p. 21.

³¹ Kirmani, p. 39.

³² M.M.D.L.T, p. 37.

³³ Ibid, p. 38.



Top: The fort of Devanahalli near Bangalore which was Haidar's first important command and also the birthplace of his son Tipu Sultan. Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Devanahalli_fort_entrance.JPG (accessed on February 20, 2016).

Bottom: The fort of Dindigul which formed Haidar's first jagir. Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dindigul_Fort#/media/File:Dindigul_Fort.jpg (accessed on February 20, 2016).

Lawrence continued with the stout defence of Thiruchirapalli and Nanjaraja failed to make any headway.

In 1755, the Nizam of Hyderabad Salabat Jung attacked Mysore and so Nanjaraja was compelled to raise the siege and return home to defend it. Since the time of Mohammad Shah the Mughal emperor, the Nizam held the title of *Subedar* (governor) of the Deccan provinces which gave him the right to collect taxes and tributes from the feudatory kingdoms. On the plea that Mysore had once been conquered by Aurangzeb, the Nizam levied tribute on that kingdom which he could realise only partially³⁴. These costly military adventures had greatly drained Mysore of men and money which it could ill afford, weakening the central government and strengthening the position of military commanders like Haidar who could press their demands using the forces at their command. Also, it marked the beginning of the enmity of Mysore towards the Nawab of g Mohammad Ali and the Maratha chieftain Murari Rao Ghorpade of Gooty. This rivalry would continue throughout the life of Haidar Ali and would worsen with time.

On his return to Mysore, Nanjaraja appointed Haidar as the *faujdar* of Dindigul in 1755³⁵. This was an important fort located in the Carnatic-Payanghat region at a considerable distance from the capital city and was under constant threat of attack by the neighbouring Polygars as well as Arcot and hence required an able commander. In this post, Haidar Ali considerably increased his forces by enlisting Bedar tribesmen and Pindari horsemen who were skilful in plundering retreating armies. Along with them, he launched raids on the neighbouring Polygars using a mixture of guile and force and gaining considerable plunder. One episode illustrated Haidar's methods; he offered the Polygars of Palni and Virupakshi a reduction in their dues to Mysore if he could pass through their territory to which they agreed. Once he reached a favourable position, he swept off all the cattle in the surrounding areas which he sold at Dharapuram for handsome returns³⁶. He was also not above using false musters and inflating the soldiers' lists in order to get more money from Nanjaraja³⁷. Haidar's time at Dindigul was spent mainly in reducing the refractory Polygars in which he succeeded after a long struggle. But this meant that they now owed allegiance to him rather than to his sovereign in Mysore. Haidar had also left his subordinate Khande Rao as his *vakil* (agent) in Mysore to look after his interests. Using the wealth generated, Haidar induced French

³⁴Hayavadana Rao, p. 2472.

³⁵Ibid; Malleon, p. 214; Sinha, p. 25-26.

³⁶Wilks, Vol. I, p. 353.

³⁷Ibid.

gunsmiths and other engineers to serve under him. Through them, he began to maintain a regular artillery corps along with a foundry to manufacture guns, cannonballs and explosives³⁸.

The next important episode in the rise of Haidar occurred in 1756. In that year, the Mysore king Krishnaraja Wodeyar II, who felt stifled under the control of Nanjaraja, rebelled against him. This involved resuming the estates made to the latter's adherents such as Haidar Ali. But Nanjaraja managed to overpower Krishnaraja and put him under house arrest. Khande Rao advised Haidar to come immediately to the capital in order to save his *jagirs*³⁹. But before he arrived, the Marathas invaded Mysore territory and besieged the capital, demanding tribute from the ruler⁴⁰. Similar to the Nizam, the Marathas claimed the right of levying *chauth* (tribute) from former Mughal territories under the provisions of a treaty between Bahadur Shah I and Shahu⁴¹. The Maratha raids in southern India became an annual feature from the 1750s onwards. In the meantime, the profligate policies of the rulers of Mysore had left little money in the treasury and Nanjaraja was not able to realise the balance. He was forced to pledge considerable territory to the Marathas, which included towns like Nagamangala and Turuvekere, to make up for the deficit, and they in turn stationed their agents at these places. After Haidar arrived at Srirangapatna, he expelled the Marathas and restored Mysore's control over the former territories. Also he quelled unrest in the army over arrears in pay by mediating an agreement between the government and the troops⁴². While paying the arrears, he seized the wealthiest of the army chiefs as leaders of the mutiny and confiscated their wealth which he used to replenish the treasury and enrich himself. This further raised his standing at the court and with the army. His *jagirs* were therefore restored to him.

In the same year, his brother Shahbaz died without having surviving male heirs, and his estates devolved on Haidar. This left him in possession of a vast tract of land as well as a troop of over 15,000 men which included 200 Europeans and 3000 cavalry⁴³. Thus Haidar had considerably enhanced his power and prestige during this period of crisis. He also showed his ruthless streak by having his rival Hari Singh and his followers killed shortly

³⁸ Hayavadana Rao, p. 2473.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid; Wilks, Vol. I, pp. 359-360.

⁴¹ Surendra Nath Sen, *The Military System of the Marathas*, K.P. Bagchi & Company, Delhi, 1979, p. 39.

⁴² Hayavadana Rao, pp. 2474-2475.

⁴³ M.M.D.L.T., p. 39.

afterwards and seizing most of his possessions⁴⁴. Kirmani tried to put a positive spin on this treacherous act by saying that Hari Singh had fallen into disfavour with Nanjaraja who authorised Haidar to do the deed⁴⁵. But this, of course, is not corroborated by any other source, including De la Tour's account which indicated that Haidar acted purely on his own volition. Haidar presented 3 guns and 15 horses to the king and in lieu of his past services was given the *jagir* of Bangalore along with the assignment of collecting revenue from Coimbatore⁴⁶. All this while, he maintained independent relations with the French government in Pondicherry from whom he routinely received weapons and occasionally military advisers. The French sought his support against the English in the third Carnatic war. Haidar sent a sizable force to reinforce their operations against Arcot. This deepened the rift between him and the Nawab Mohammad Ali.

Haidar by now possessed a considerable army of men. He appointed men of his choice, especially his relatives, to high positions within his service. His force at Dindigul was commanded by his brother-in-law Mir Makhdoom Ali Khan and another corps was commanded by Mir Raza Ali Khan, another brother-in-law and uncle of Tipu. Makhdoom Ali was Haidar's closest friend and confidante and was the leader of the massacre of Hari Singh and his troops⁴⁷. In late 1758, the Maratha forces under Gopal Rao Patwardhan and Anand Rao Raaste again invaded the territories of Mysore, laying siege to Bangalore and, by climbing over the walls, seized Chennapatna which lay between Bangalore and Mysore⁴⁸. This could be achieved because the level terrain and sparse vegetation proved ideal ground for cavalry manoeuvres. Haidar's trusted lieutenant, Latif Ali Beg, was attacked by the Marathas in Maddur. Slipping out of the cordon one night, Latif Ali made a circuitous march to Chennapatna and recaptured the fort⁴⁹.

Haidar now attacked the forces of the Maratha chief Gopal Rao Patwardhan who was besieging Bangalore, and utilised his favourite tactics which he had learnt in the siege of Thiruchirappalli. He would stand guard at camp during the day and then make surprise attacks against the Maratha forces at night using his light cavalry as the striking arm⁵⁰. Through his excellent intelligence network, he prevented provisions from reaching the

⁴⁴ Hayavadana Rao, p. 2476; Sinha, p. 34; Wilks, Vol I, p. 369.

⁴⁵ Kirmani, *History of Hydrabad Naik*, pp. 42-44.

⁴⁶ Hayavadana Rao, pp. 2475-2476.

⁴⁷ Wilks, Vol. I, p. 369.

⁴⁸ Robson, pp. 12-13; Sinha, *Haidar Ali*, pp. 36-37.

⁴⁹ Wilks, Vol. I, pp. 369-371.

⁵⁰ Ibid; Robson, pp. 13-14.

Marathas by attacking their foraging parties and supply trains. Haidar Ali generally avoided decisive open battles against the Marathas as he knew he could not prevail against them. With Haidar Ali cutting off the raiding parties, Gopal Rao found himself in dire straits as the Maratha troops were generally reimbursed through the booty collected. He negotiated a withdrawal of the Maratha forces in exchange for a payment of 32 lakh rupees⁵¹. These tactics were typical of Haidar's military style and he would use them repeatedly in his future wars. Following the retreat of the Marathas, Haidar made a triumphant entry into Srirangapatna where he was received by Krishnaraja Wodeyar in a splendid court and conferred the title *Fateh Haidar Bahadur*⁵².

Events started moving now with extreme rapidity. The king continued to chafe at the dominance of Nanjaraja. He sought the help of Haidar through Khande Rao for ousting him. In the process, he would be given additional territory which would amount to over half the kingdom of Mysore. The events took place as planned and Nanjaraja was forced to quit the capital in 1759 strengthening Haidar Ali's control over the kingdom⁵³. But now the king realised that he had only exchanged one master for another. The royal family now began to plot along with Khande Rao, who also resented the growing power of his superior Haidar Ali, to oust him from power. They also sought the help of the Marathas and the British at Madras to put their scheme into operation. Already there were several skirmishes between the armies of Mysore and the Nawab of Arcot, including a particularly serious clash with the Arcot general Mohammad Yusuf Khan in November 1757 where Haidar was defeated and forced to return to Dindigul⁵⁴. Furthermore, the time seemed ripe as half of Haidar's army was away under Makhdoom Ali assisting the French in the third Carnatic War. Haidar had already signed a treaty with the French on June 4, 1760, which gave him the Baramahal district⁵⁵. On August 12, 1760, Haidar was fired upon from the fort when he approached Srirangapatna. He found that the gates were closed to him. He escaped to Bangalore which was under his uncle Ibrahim and summoned the rest of his army from Dindigul and beyond⁵⁶. In this time of desperate crisis, Haidar Ali even supplicated himself to Nanjaraja and asked for support. The erstwhile *Dalavayi* saw an opportunity to regain power and so decided to help his former protégé monetarily and politically. It finally boiled down to a contest between the troops of

⁵¹ Wilks, Vol. I, p. 371.

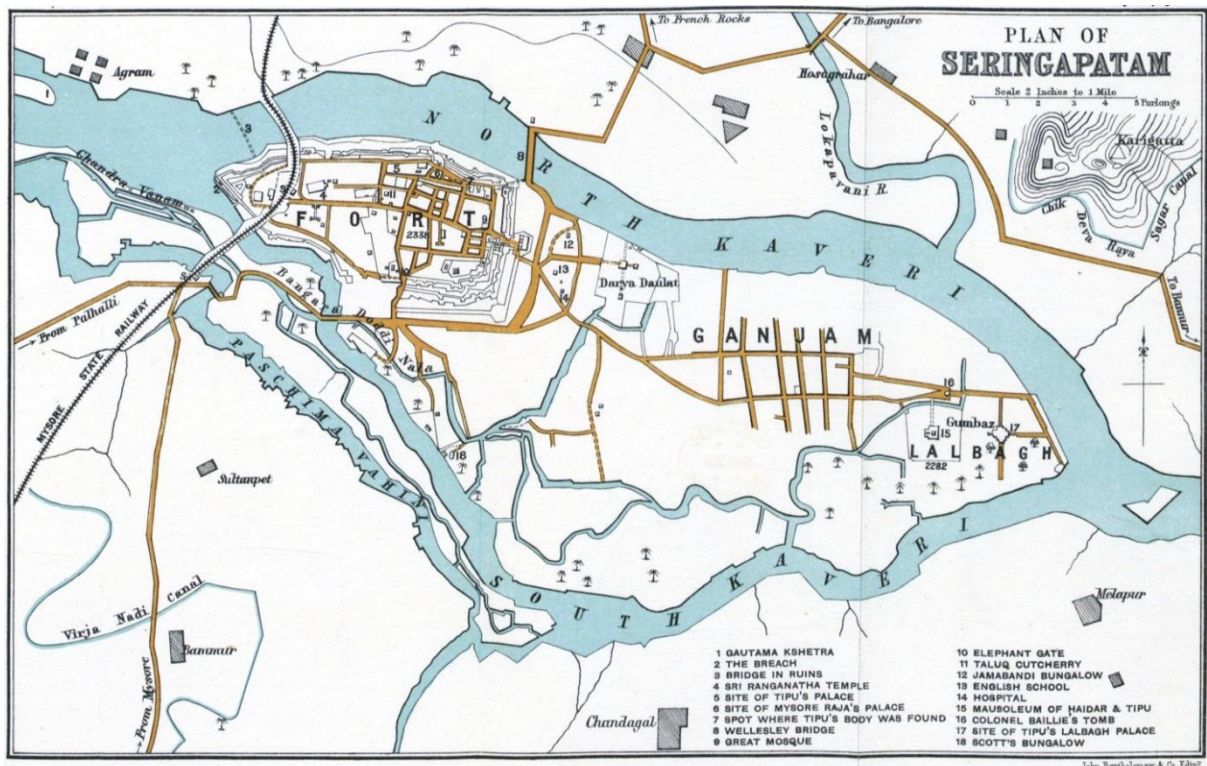
⁵² Hayavadana Rao, pp. 2476-2477; Robson, p. 15.

⁵³ Hayavadana Rao, pp. 2476-2477.

⁵⁴ Sinha, *Haidar Ali*, pp. 25-27.

⁵⁵ Ibid, p. 48.

⁵⁶ Robson, p. 17.



Top: The fort of Srirangapatna. Source: <http://www.karnatakaturism.org/Srirangapatna/en> (accessed on February 20, 2016).

Bottom: Map of Srirangapatna. Source: Originally published in Mysore Gazetteer, Vol 2 by B. Lewis Rice, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Srirangapatna#/media/File:Sringapatam_plan.jpg (accessed on February 20, 2016).

Haidar and Khande Rao. The Marathas could not help Khande Rao as their army was away at Panipat; and the British could not come to his aid as they were preoccupied with the Third Carnatic War against the French.

Haidar gathered his forces at Bangalore and prepared to meet the Mysore troops which were superior in number and armament. He resorted to a trick which has many parallels in Indian history. He arranged for a forged letter to fall into the hands of Khande Rao which stated that the Mysore army commanders were in league with Haidar and would deliver Khande Rao to him. Khande Rao fled the field and his army disintegrated. Now, gathering his forces, Haidar marched to Srirangapatna where he made a surprise attack on the Mysore army and routed it, capturing Khande Rao who was put in a cage for the rest of his days⁵⁷. Haidar now appeared before the king and appropriated the post of sarvadhikari for himself. Nanjaraja was sidelined and was provided with a pension⁵⁸. By June 1761, at the age of 39, Haidar had emerged as the ruler of Mysore in all but name and had reduced the Wodeyar kings to the status of *roi fainéant*. He lost no time in cementing his authority in the state and immediately ordered a thorough audit of the kingdom's treasury and accounts. It was found that most of the gold and the ornaments of the kingdom had been pawned to private bankers called *sahukars* in the city of Mysore in order to raise the money for tribute during the multiple invasions of the Nizam and the Marathas. These were mainly Hindus who extended their credit not only to the Hindu and Muslim royal families but to Europeans as well⁵⁹. Haidar immediately ordered his troops that these items be seized but the *sahukars* would be partially compensated, and where it was impractical, their sons would be taken into government service. Anyone found guilty of fraudulent accounts would be imprisoned and his property confiscated⁶⁰. These orders were promptly carried out which replenished the treasury of Mysore considerably. Mysore now had a rigorous system of revenue collection and there was a growing centralization of power centred on the person of Haidar Ali. This system would continue under his son Tipu Sultan⁶¹.

Haidar Ali's Personal Habits

The Frenchman De la Tour gave a detailed description of Haidar's routine during this period. The new ruler of Mysore was five feet six inches tall and was physically extremely strong. Unusually, he preferred to be clean-shaven without any beard or moustache. Hence, his

⁵⁷ Hayavadana Rao, pp. 2478-2482; Robson, pp. 17-23.

⁵⁸ Hayavadana Rao, p. 2492.

⁵⁹ C.A. Bayly, p. 59.

⁶⁰ M.M.D.L.T., p. 49.

⁶¹ C.A. Bayly, p. 95.

hairdressing routine used to take two to three hours every day. When not campaigning he would usually wear a white robe like his contemporaries. He had a specially designed uniform for himself which he would don for battle consisting of a vest of white satin with gold flowers, yellow in front with yellow cords. The underclothes were the same and the footwear was of yellow velvet, his sword-belt was adorned with gems and a flat-topped turban without ornaments was on his head. While travelling on foot, he would use a gold-headed cane. Apart from that, he seldom used jewellery⁶².

In matters of state, Haidar used to keep an open court. People could come and ask to meet him at any hour of the day and present their petitions to him. Even wandering mendicants could come and sit near him. Typically, he would rise at dawn and meet with his intelligence agents and military officers and listen to their reports while going through his hairdressing routine. Then for an hour in the morning, he would be in the company of his intimate friends and relations. Occasionally at this time, he would appear on the balcony of his palace where he would view a spectacle of his pet elephants and tigers. Then, in the midmorning, Haidar would go to the audience hall to transact the business of the state⁶³. Not being literate himself, he would have the reports and petitions read to himself and then would dictate a reply. He compensated for this weakness by a prodigious memory and keen discernment of details, having a good knowledge of Urdu, Kannada, Marathi, Telugu and Tamil. He used an inverted form of the Urdu letter for 'H' as his signature on documents⁶⁴. All around him would be guards not only to protect him but also administer punishments on those who felt his wrath. He would return to the balcony in the evenings in order to observe his troops conduct exercises. Usually in the night there would be entertainment such as dancing girls and puppet shows⁶⁵. Haidar usually retired to his private chambers at midnight. However, he could be called on at any time in order to discuss affairs of the state or if any emergency has arisen.

Conquests

Haidar was careful not to supplant the Wodeyar king of Mysore. This seems to have been a calculated move on his part. For more than a century, the Wodeyar kings had enjoyed the respect of the people of Mysore. Overthrowing them might result in a serious rebellion. In a recent study, the scholar Kate Brittlebank has examined how Haidar and later Tipu kept up

⁶² M.M.D.L.T, pp. 15-16.

⁶³ Ibid, pp. 17-19.

⁶⁴ Hayavadana Rao, p. 2537.

⁶⁵ M.M.D.L.T., pp. 23-24.

the charade of being subservient to the Wodeyar kings while retaining power⁶⁶. Krishnaraja Wodeyar II was essentially a prisoner in his palace. Each year during Dusshera, the king would be presented to the people. Though he held the post of Sarvadhikari and prostrated before Krishnaraja, Haidar was essentially the ruler of Mysore. But like any other Indian ruler in the eighteenth century, Haidar Ali was primarily a warrior. He had to wage war not only to expand his kingdom but also to preserve it. The main income of the state came from booty and tribute extracted from feudatories and other rulers in the vicinity. Any kingdom which did not wage war usually became a target for rapacious invaders. So no sooner had he consolidated his power in the kingdom of Mysore, Haidar began to wage war anew in order to add new territories to his kingdom.

Haidar's real career as a conqueror began after the consolidation of his power in 1761. The reverses suffered by the Marathas at Panipat and the subsequent death of Balaji Baji Rao had put a stop to their incursions for the time being leaving Mysore undisturbed. In September-October of that year, he assisted Basalat Jung, brother of Nizam Ali Khan and one of the claimants to the title of Nizam of Hyderabad, in the capture of the fort of Hoskote. He received *sanads* (imperial decrees), in exchange for a payment of 3 lakh rupees, for the title of the Nawab of Sira⁶⁷. From now on, he started styling himself *Nawab Haidar Ali Khan Bahadur*⁶⁸. Haidar's next target was the nearby fort of Doddaballapur which held special significance for him. It was held by Abbas Quli Khan who had tortured Haidar in his youth. Abbas Quli Khan fled on the approach of Haidar who was able to capture the fort without a struggle. He then advanced with Basalat Jung to lay siege to Sira which was now his fief. Using the time-tested methods of digging tunnels underneath the walls of the fort and then blowing them up with explosives to weaken the bastions, Sira was taken. Haidar took care to appropriate the greater part of the arms and the treasure found in the fort by hiding them from Basalat's men⁶⁹.

During the campaign in Hoskote, Haidar's general Faizullah Khan (erroneously given by Wilks as Fazalullah Khan) was conferred with the title *Haibat Jung*⁷⁰. After the siege of Sira in 1762, Basalat Jung returned to take part in the power struggle with his brothers in

⁶⁶Kate Brittlebank, *Tipu's Search for Legitimacy: Islam and Kingship in a Hindu Domain*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1997, pp. 19-22.

⁶⁷ Fortescue, p. 113.

⁶⁸ Kirmani, p. 112; Sinha, *Haidar Ali*, p. 60; Wilks, vol I, p. 439.

⁶⁹Sinha, pp. 61-62; Punganuri, p. 10; Robson, p25.

⁷⁰ Kirmani, p. 114, Wilks, Vol. I, p. 439.

Hyderabad, giving Haidar a clear field to advance his designs. The Mysore ruler's next target was the fort of Chikkaballapur which had been one of the dependencies of the old Nawab of Sira. The Polygar of Chikkaballapur put up a stubborn resistance which went on for over three months in which thousands were killed and even invited aid from Murari Rao, the Ghorpade chieftain of Gooty. Haidar defeated Murari Rao's relief column in a surprise attack and cut off supplies to the fort. The Polygar offered to surrender but at night gave up his fort to the troops of Murari Rao and fled to Nandidurga. Haidar finally took the fort by escalade. He laid waste the surrounding countryside with his light cavalry cutting off supplies for the Polygars in the area⁷¹. This was his standard military tactic in conducting sieges. To prevent Murari Rao from again interfering with his plans, he quickly captured the forts of Kodikonda, Penukonda and Madakasira which controlled access to the region. Murari Rao accepted defeat and retreated to Gooty.

The chiefs of Rayadurga and Harapanahalli, along with Nandidurga, now made their submissions to Haidar and paid him tribute. In contrast, the Polygar of Chitradurga attempted to prevaricate which caused Haidar to raid his territory with his cavalry. This forced the recalcitrant chief also to submit and pay a fine along with the stipulated tribute. Meanwhile, the Polygar of Chikkaballapur, who had been seized in Nandidurga, was sent as a prisoner to Bangalore and his two sons were converted to Islam⁷². This contrasts sharply with Haidar's conduct at Doddaballapur, in which he treated the captured family of Abbas Quli Khan with respect. Also, he courteously dealt with the Polygars who had submitted to him and released them with honours and presents, including the Polygar of Chitradurga⁷³. This seems to have been a calculated move on his part. The chief of Chikkaballapur had stoutly resisted him and duped him later. Haidar was sending out a powerful message that those who submitted to him without resistance would enjoy his favours while those who went against him would have to face the consequences. He would retain this vindictive streak throughout his life which would be tempered by the practical necessities of a life lived mostly in the saddle. Having consolidated his gains, Haidar was now ready for his next major conquest, the rich trading kingdom of Bidanur.

In January 1763, the Chitradurga chief introduced Haidar to a pretender to the throne of Bidanur named Chennabasavayya who claimed it from Rani Virammaji, the incumbent on

⁷¹ Punganuri, p. 10; Sinha, p. 63; Wilks, Vol I, p. 446.

⁷² Sinha, p. 63.

⁷³ Ibid.

the throne. The pretender offered to enrich Haidar considerably if he would assist him in seizing the throne. Haidar acquiesced though as always he regarded this alliance as temporary. The armies of Mysore and Chitradurga set out in late January to the hills of Bidanur. Though the city and the surrounding forts were ideal for a defensive strategy, using local knowledge of unguarded paths, Haidar and his generals managed to seize the forts one by one. Wherever he encountered resistance, Haidar had the ears and noses of his captives cut off⁷⁴. This had been a standard punishment procedure in the history of Mysore and had been used for centuries by Rajas like Kantirava Narasaraja Wodeyar and Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar⁷⁵. But in this case, Haidar's motive seems to have been to intimidate the local population. Naturally, this is left unmentioned by Kirmani. Finally the troops stormed Bidanur in March and captured Virammaji who was sent in captivity to Madhugiri along with Chennabasavayya. The treasure he seized at the capital was estimated to be about 12 million pounds sterling⁷⁶. This was by far his largest haul from any conquest. After putting down rebellions in the region and consolidating his position in Bidanur, Haidar now seems to have entertained the notion of becoming a sovereign ruler in name as well as in fact.

His first act was to rename Bidanur as Haidarnagar after himself. This implied that he intended to build an independent capital city in the style of the earlier Mughals and sultans. He made arrangements to move his family from Srirangapatna to a new palace being built in Haidarnagar. And finally, to stamp his authority as an independent king, he ordered the construction of a mint and the issuing of a new currency⁷⁷. He introduced the *Bahaduri* pagoda which would go on to have wide circulation. It was based on a coin used by Sadashiva Nayaka, one of the predecessors of Virammaji. Without doubt, this was a gesture to conciliate the populace of his new kingdom. On the obverse of the coin was the initial of his name which he used to sign; and on the reverse were the deities Shiva and Parvati⁷⁸. Importantly, the prosperous port of Mangalore with its rich pepper trade now passed into the hands of Haidar. Conscious that he would have to develop oceangoing capabilities, he ordered the construction of a new dock in the port for building naval ships and placed it under

⁷⁴ Robson, p. 32; Wilks, p. 450.

⁷⁵ Vikram Sampath, *Splendours of Royal Mysore: The Untold Story of the Wodeyars*, Rupa & Co., 2009, p. 40.

⁷⁶ M.M.D.L.T., pp. 55-59; Punganuri, p. 11; Kirmani, pp. 125-139; Wilks, Vol. I, pp. 445-455.

⁷⁷ Charles Rathbone Low, *History of the Indian Navy, 1613-1863*, Vol I, Richard Bentley and Son, London, 1877, p. 153; Punganuri, p. 11, (however he does not mention who was in charge of the fleet); Wilks, Vol. I, pp. 450-454.

⁷⁸ J.R. Henderson, *THE COINS OF HAIDAR ALI AND TIPU SULTAN*, Government Press, Madras, 1921, p. 1.

the command of his trusted lieutenant, Latif Ali Beg⁷⁹. Also in December 1763, Faizullah Khan attacked and conquered the region of Sunda in the north along with Shiveshwar, Sadashivgad and Ankola⁸⁰. These conquests further replenished Haidar's coffers.

Reorganization of the Army

Haidar Ali had great respect for the European way of waging war. After observing it in close detail during the Carnatic wars and later during the siege of Tiruchirapalli, he began recruiting French engineers and soldiers into his army. This substantially increased after the surrender of Pondicherry in the third Carnatic war which enabled a large number of Frenchmen and their dependants to rally under his flag. However, the major reorganization of his army took place between late 1763 and mid-1765. It was around that time that Mir Ali Raza Khan (not to be confused with Haidar Ali's brother-in-law of the same name), the son of Chanda Sahib, came over from Ceylon and joined Haidar's service and was given a *jagir* and a military command. Having fought along with the French in the aforementioned wars, Raza Khan had a good working knowledge of the French military. Haidar appointed him to reorganize and improve his army, particularly in the fields of discipline and efficiency⁸¹.

Ali Raza Khan set about his assigned task with zeal and energy. A uniform was introduced for the infantry soldiers of the army. But this was more likely for the regular army rather than for the irregular levies. The soldiers were divided into two classes- *avval* and *duum* or 'first rank' and 'second rank' respectively⁸². The first rank consisted of grenadiers and the second rank consisted of the remaining troops. The grenadier rank was much more prestigious and carried more salary as compared to the other rank. It consisted of troops who were selected for showing courage and loyalty in battle rather than on physical fitness. The grenadiers consisted of a corps of five thousand troops which was subdivided into ten battalions of five hundred soldiers each. Each battalion had four companies of one hundred twenty five men each⁸³. Two of the ten battalions were composed of the Topass mercenaries who had joined Haidar's standard. The remaining eight battalions consisted of the local troops of Haidar. Each battalion was commanded by a European. Also each company was under the charge of a European adjutant. The grenadiers were drilled regularly every morning and afternoon in the

⁷⁹ Punganuri, p. 11; Wilks, Vol. I, p. 454.

⁸⁰ Punganuri, p. 11; Robson, p. 32; Sinha, *Haidar Ali*, p. 70.

⁸¹ Wilks, Vol. I, p. 456-457.

⁸² Ibid; Punganuri, p. 13.

⁸³ Nikiles Guha, *Pre-British State System in South India: Mysore 1761-1799*, Ratna Prakashan, Calcutta, 1985, p. 62.

European manner but only by their own officers whom they would salute. Also, they were exempt from performing laborious tasks except if their commander desired them to do so.

The Topasses were Christians of mixed Portuguese and Indian ancestry and hailed mainly from the coastal areas. They generally wore European-style trousers and a hat and were generally armed with muskets⁸⁴. They served as mercenaries throughout peninsular India during the Carnatic wars. Haidar reposed great faith in them as he had seen their prowess during his previous encounters with the Europeans. The most famous Topass in Haidar's service was Eloy Joze Correa Peixoto, born of a Portuguese father and a Kannada mother, who joined him in 1758 and served till 1771, with an interval from 1767 to 1769. He aided Haidar's rise to power and later wrote memoirs of his service in Mysore⁸⁵. As Haidar had been long utilising their services, he regarded the Topasses as his best troops and he preferred them over his other infantry. They served only under European officers and those who performed well in battle were promoted.

However, there was a serious defect to this system of recruiting mercenaries. Their loyalty to Haidar was dubious and as mercenaries they would desert if offered higher pay by the opposition. Also, Haidar seems to have been deficient in judging the character of the Europeans whom he recruited into his army and did not properly assess their military knowledge or capability. This was tellingly illustrated by an incident that occurred in the 1760s. A clerk named Stuart travelled from Madras to Mysore territory. Haidar asked him to train his troops despite him being a civilian and untrained in military matters. When Stuart tried to point this out, Haidar said that he "never doubted the soldiership of a man who wore a Hatt."⁸⁶ Stuart was able to escape from Haidar's reach after several months. But this suggests that Haidar Ali seems to have appointed his commanders on the basis of impulse and personal prejudice rather than on the basis of proven loyalty and ability. This was an extremely short-sighted policy and was the cause of the many betrayals that Haidar would endure throughout his career.

The regular standing infantry in Haidar's service was known as *Barh*⁸⁷. The troops in this category were dressed in red and green uniforms with facings of various colours. Unlike most other native troops, they were armed with flintlock muskets purchased from the French and,

⁸⁴ Col. S. Rivett-Carnac, *The Presidential Armies of India*, W.H. Allen & Co., London, 1890, p. 52.

⁸⁵ Kate Brittlebank, *Tipu Sultan's Search for Legitimacy*, p. 20.

⁸⁶ Orme, *Mr. Stuart's Travels in Coromandel and Dekan 1764*, published in Brittlebank, p. 21.

⁸⁷ Nikiles Guha, op. cit., pp. 66-67.

to some extent, from the British in Bombay. To supplement these troops, a large corps of irregular infantry was recruited. They were divided into three types. The first type was the *Ahasham* foot consisting of soldiers armed with locally made matchlocks. These irregular foot soldiers had been named thus since Mughal times⁸⁸. They were mainly used as skirmishers or as sharpshooters and also to guard the supply trains during a march⁸⁹. They had a reputation of shooting very accurately and so were valued as snipers. The second type of irregular infantry was the Bedar levies which often composed the levies from the feudatory Polygars or from the surrounding countryside. They were armed only with a bamboo spear, about 18 to 20 feet long, with which they rushed into battle. They were mainly used in the manner of the European pikemen. When the army was attacked by opposing cavalry, they would form a protective ring around the *Ahasham* troops and would attack the horses which got too close⁹⁰. They were also used in a skirmishing role. The third category of irregular infantry was that of the *Juzail-burdars* who used rockets. This rocket, called *ban* locally, consisted of a tube of bamboo or iron, of about 3-6 kg, filled with explosive powder with a stalk of bamboo of several hundred centimetres length which would act as a stabilizer during flight. With range of around 2 km, the rockets used as projectiles could cause havoc and confusion among massed infantry or cavalry and could detonate the gunpowder stores in the enemy's camp⁹¹.

The cavalry was also composed of a regular standing troop which served full time and was supplemented by a larger corps of irregulars. The troops of the regular cavalry were called *Savars* and wore thickly quilted cotton tunics. These uniforms rendered them proof against sword blows but were less effective against musketry. They were mainly armed with swords as a mark of prestige. The irregular cavalry was recruited only during times of war. Some of them were armed with matchlocks in the style of the European Hussars. Others were armed with bamboo spears or with bows and arrows. The Polygars had to send fixed musters to him on demand. The Chitradurga polygar had to send 1000 cavalry and 4000 foot soldiers, the Rayadurga chief had to contribute 200 horses and 2000 foot; the Anegundi chieftain had to give 100 horse and 1000 foot; the chief of Kanakagiri gave 200 horse and 1500 foot; and the Nawab of Kadapa had to give 2000 cavalry. Haidar would pay these troops 4 Haidari pagodas

⁸⁸ William Irvine, *The Army of The Indian Moghuls: Its Organization and Administration*, Luzac & Co., London, 1963, p. 160.

⁸⁹ Ibid; Nikiles Guha, p. 66.

⁹⁰ Nikiles Guha, pp. 66-67.

⁹¹ Ibid.

(about Rs. 16) to each cavalryman and one pagoda to each footman. However, they would be paid only when they were called to battle. If the Polygar was unable to send troops as demanded, then the tribute imposed on him could be hiked. Besides these contingents, Haidar maintained a personal bodyguard known as *Paigah* which answered only to him and was kept at a strength of 12,000 troops. He also raised a battalion of orphans that he had maintained and called it the *chela* battalion which became attached to his entourage⁹².

Besides the above contingents, at least one member of every family in the army served as a *Candachar*. The main duty of the *Candachars* was to act as couriers and spies and porters for the army on the march. They were armed mainly with bamboo spears and occasionally matchlocks. During lean times, they served as watchmen in the villages or in the community cultivated fields. They also served as law-keepers of their respective villages⁹³. Since almost every village had a makeshift fort, they effectively constituted a line of defence in case of an attack on the Mysore dominions. Half their salary was paid in terms of fallow lands which they could cultivate; and the other half was paid in cash which amounted to about 2-3 rupees a month.

Also, after his conquest of Bidanur which included the port of Mangalore, Haidar set about raising a fleet. He knew the importance of getting access to the sea both for trade as well as for military purposes⁹⁴. The British writers such as Wilks and Charles Rathbone Low said that the fleet of Haidar Ali was commanded by Latif Ali. However, de la Tour said that the admiral of Haidar's navy was an Englishman named Stannet⁹⁵. This is confirmed by Portuguese records in Goa which state that Haidar had built a fleet which was commanded by an Englishman. The scholar Suerendra Nath Sen has done an extensive study on Haidar Ali's fleet based on British and Portuguese records. According to a Portuguese letter from Goa dated September 23, 1765, Haidar Ali had a fleet of thirty warships along with smaller ships for transport purposes which was commanded by an Englishman⁹⁶. One possible explanation for this discrepancy in the sources is that while Latif Ali Beg was in charge of the fort of Mangalore and by extension the port, the command of this fleet was entrusted to an Englishman named Stannet. However, Stannet would desert with the fleet to Bombay in 1768

⁹² Nikiles Guha, p. 68.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ C.A. Bayly, p. 90.

⁹⁵ M.M.D.L.T., p. 162.

⁹⁶ *Officios dos Governadores, Maço 3, No. 44*, published in Surendra Nath Sen, *Hyder Ali's Fleet*, in *Studies in Indian History*, Government Press, Calcutta, 1930, p. 149.

thus bringing to nought the efforts to establish a navy⁹⁷. After the war, Haidar tried to rebuild his fleet but this time at Bhatkal which was further from Bombay than Mangalore. By 1778 he was building a number of ships with the help of the Dutch⁹⁸. But Haidar Ali's ships were destroyed by the English navy in 1780 during the Second Anglo-Mysore War and his death in 1782 stalled further efforts⁹⁹.

Haidar moved away from the prevailing customs when it came to disbursing salaries. Earlier, no payment was done during the extra month inserted to adjust between the lunar and the solar calendars as it was considered unlucky. Haidar instead issued two half-*pattis* (descriptive rolls) during each month. Each enrolled soldier in his army from the highest cavalry officer to the lowest soldier had a *patti* or descriptive roll issued at the time of joining. This roll contained his description and distinguishing marks along with that of his horse in case of the cavalry, and also with rank and pay for the period. These rolls were issued in Persian, Kannada and Marathi and were regularly checked. As a result, for the first time in decades the troops could get their salaries regularly. However, the troops of the *silahadar* horse were a different case. These troops were not issued horses by the government and hence had to supply their own mounts. They received their rolls in terms of rupees of account valued at two-thirds of the actual value once in 35-45 days. The arrears were collected at the end of the year in terms of the booty seized¹⁰⁰.

However, there was a drawback to this system. The *silahadar* cavalry had to find their own horses. If their horses died, they could not expect compensation or reimbursement from the officialdom. Therefore, they were reluctant to risk their horses in engagements. Also, the horses used throughout the Mysore cavalry were the local ponies known as *tattus*¹⁰¹. These ponies were smaller than the horses of the Kabul or Arabian breeds and as such did not have great strength or endurance. Therefore, they generally could not be used for pitched battles in the long term. Haidar did not pay attention to importing superior breeds of horses from overseas even after taking the port city of Mangalore and was never able to fill this crucial gap. The use of superior Kabuli or Arabian horses in his cavalry would have enabled his army to perform much more creditably against the Marathas. But the cavalry he possessed

⁹⁷ C.R. Low, *History of the Indian Navy*, p. 152; Mohibbul Hasan Khan, *History of Tipu Sultan*, The Bibliophile Ltd., Calcutta, 1951, p. 352; S.N. Sen, *Hyder Ali's fleet*, pp. 149-150.

⁹⁸ Sen, *Hyder Ali's Fleet*, pp. 150-151.

⁹⁹ Ibid, pp. 152-153; C.R. Low, p. 178, Nikiles Guha, p. 69.

¹⁰⁰ Nikiles Guha, p. 71.

¹⁰¹ Lewis Rice, *Mysore: A Gazetteer*, p. 198.

certainly was very effective and Arthur Wellesly in the 1790s described the Mysore light cavalry as the 'best in the world'¹⁰².

The Mysore ruler also ensured that the great part of the wealth he spent on his army would come back to him. Adriaan Moens, the Dutch governor of the Malabar gave a detailed description of the subterfuge employed. The soldiers under Haidar, be they Indian or European, would have to buy everything they needed from the sutlers and merchants in the camp at rates set by him only. These sutlers would have to provide their accounts and pay the taxes to the officials of the treasury. Hence, the expenditure on the army ultimately returned to Haidar. This no doubt cost him the loyalty of many of his subjects¹⁰³. Though there was discontent among the troops about this, Haidar quelled dissent by the use of an excellent espionage network.

Relations with the Marathas and the British

By the end of 1763, Haidar's dominions reached the banks of the river Tungabhadra; and he was still keen to expand northwards though this would bring him into conflict with the Marathas. Accordingly, in 1764 Faizullah Khan, on Haidar's orders, defeated the Nawab of Savanur and extracted a huge tribute from him as well as the acceptance of the status of vassal¹⁰⁴. He also conquered Dharwad and Bankapur to the north of Bidanur¹⁰⁵. The Peshwa Madhava Rao I could hardly ignore the rapid expansion of Haidar's territory which was now steadily encroaching into the Maratha sphere of influence. He sent his general Gopal Rao Patwardhan to check the advance of the Mysore forces. But Gopal Rao was defeated by Faizullah Khan with heavy losses and forced to retreat. Madhava Rao now began to understand what a formidable threat Haidar and his forces were. He decided to personally take the field against the Mysore ruler with an army of 40,000 cavalry. At this time, Haidar could muster around 20,000 troops to meet this challenge. However, most of these were the levies supplied by his reluctant vassals which were of dubious loyalty and hence could not be fully relied upon.

The Maratha offensive started in the summer of 1764¹⁰⁶. Haidar took up a strong defensive position near Rattehalli where he planned to wear out the Maratha troops and then force them

¹⁰² C.A. Bayly, p. 96.

¹⁰³ Adriaan Moens, *Memorandum*, in Galetti, *The Dutch in Malabar*, published in Nikiles Guha, op. cit. p. 65.

¹⁰⁴ Punganuri, pp. 11-12; Wilks, Vol. I, pp. 459-460.

¹⁰⁵ Wilks, Vol. I, pp. 459-460.

¹⁰⁶ Wilks, Vol. I, p. 464; Sinha, pp. 72-73.

to retreat. But Madhava Rao was an equally shrewd military leader and refused to give Haidar battle on a location favourable to him. In May, Haidar tried to use a feint to draw him into action but ended up falling for a similar tactic by his opponent and barely managed to escape. He fell back to Anavatti where he was again defeated and driven back to Bidanur¹⁰⁷. He immediately sent his family and dependants back to Srirangapatna and fortified himself in Bidanur against the Maratha assault which had been suspended with the onset of the monsoon season. In the beginning of 1765, Madhava Rao returned and laid siege to Bidanur. Haidar and his opponent engaged in manoeuvres and counter-manoevres till the Peshwa launched a surprise attack and routed Haidar's army and drove it back into the fort. Now the forts of Ikkeri, Anandapur and Kumsi also surrendered after a token resistance, feeling that they could get better terms from the Marathas. Also, rebellions in other places such as Dodaballapur and Chikkaballapur began to flare up after Haidar's reversal of fortunes¹⁰⁸.

Haidar opened up negotiations with the Marathas and started a secret correspondence with Raghunath Rao, the Peshwa's uncle, who was known to be antagonistic towards Madhava Rao. The Peshwa realised that trouble was brewing back home in Pune and decided to terminate the campaign. Haidar agreed to restore the territories wrested from Murari Rao Ghorpade and the Nawab of Savanur and pay 32 lakhs as tribute to the Peshwa who returned to Pune in February 1765¹⁰⁹. Thus Haidar lost a major part of his gains north of the Tungabhadra river. Now, Haidar realised that his most formidable opponent was Peshwa Madhava Rao I whom he had been unable to defeat using conventional tactics; so he started building up contacts with the rivals of the Peshwa such as Raghunath Rao and Janoji Bhonsle in order to weaken the position of Madhava Rao¹¹⁰. At the same time, he started consolidating his position by putting down rebellions and building forts in strategic areas¹¹¹. Also, he decided to expand to the south towards the Malabar instead.

It was at this time that Ali Raja, the Mapilla ruler of Cannanore, sought Haidar's assistance in his wars with the Nair rulers of Chirakkal and Calicut. Seizing this opportunity to further extend his power, Haidar set out in the beginning of 1766 with an army of 12,000 to march along the coast to Cannanore where he was joined by an equal number of Mapilla soldiers¹¹².

¹⁰⁷ Hayavadana Rao, op. cit., p. 2489; Sinha, p. 74.

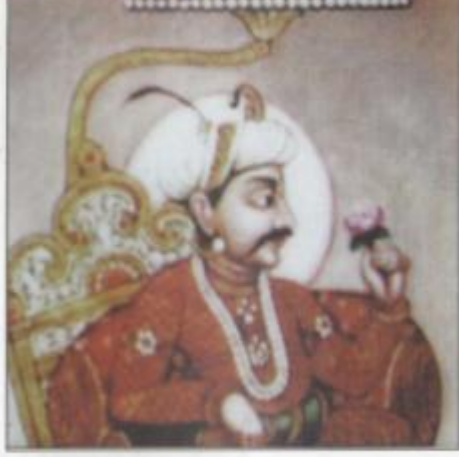
¹⁰⁸ Wilks, Vol I, p. 467.

¹⁰⁹ *Selections from the Peshwa Daftar*, vol. 37, pub. in Sinha, p. 80; Wilks, Vol. I, pp. 465-466.

¹¹⁰ Sen, *Military System of the Marathas*, p. 233.

¹¹¹ Wilks, Vol I, p. 468.

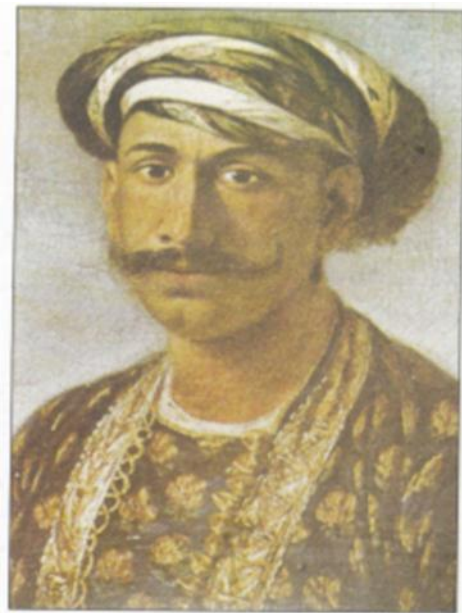
¹¹² M.M.D.L.T, op. cit. p. 66; Wilks, Vol I, p. 476.



Left: Krishnaraja Wodeyar II, the Maharaja of Mysore under whom Haidar first entered service and ultimately displaced.

Right: Nanjaraja Wodeyar, the successor of Krishnaraja Wodeyar II.

Source: Vikram Sampath, *Splendours of Royal Mysore*, plates 19 and 20.



A painting of Tipu in his younger days

Left: Peshwa Madhava Rao I, the ruler of the Maratha Confederacy. Source: <http://america.pink/images/2/8/1/2/9/7/3/en/2-madhavrao.jpg> (accessed on February 20, 2016).

Right: Tipu Sultan in his younger days. Source: Vikram Sampath, plate 20.

He then sent emissaries to the Nair rajas asking them to submit which they refused. Crossing the streams and backwaters into Calicut, Haidar inflicted several crushing defeats on the Nairs. The latter tried using guerrilla warfare with great success in the wooded tracts of the country but were finally overcome. The Zamorin of Calicut came and made his submission but when he delayed the payment of the tribute, he was placed under house arrest and his servants were tortured to extract treasure. Unwilling to submit to this humiliation, the Zamorin set his palace on fire and immolated himself within it¹¹³. With the conquest of Calicut, Haidar received the submissions of the Rajas of Cochin and Palakkad. He restored their dominions on the payment of tribute and then retired to Coimbatore leaving Raza Ali Khan in charge of Malabar¹¹⁴.

No sooner had he left the Malabar than the Nairs rose in rebellion and slaughtered large numbers of troops of Raza Khan and besieged him. Haidar returned through forced marches to the region accompanied by 3000 select cavalry and 10,000 infantry which included a large number of Europeans and Topasses. He laid waste the countryside and slaughtered a large number of the rebels. As it was the rainy season, he adopted the unusual expedient of riding horses without saddles and ordering his infantry to undress and march in their underwear. This saved many of his troops from contracting diseases in the humid climate of Malabar¹¹⁵. He now showed his usual ruthlessness by having thousands of Nairs converted to Islam and then resettled them in the depopulated areas of Mysore which resulted in a high mortality among the captives. He then proclaimed a general amnesty for the remaining Nairs and asked them to return to their lands¹¹⁶. This effectively ended the rebellion and consolidated the control of Mysore in the northern Malabar. Haidar built a fort at a strategic location in Palakkad and then returned to Mysore at the end of 1766. Also around this time, Mahfuz Khan, the brother of Mohammad Ali Khan Walajah, the Nawab of Arcot, sought refuge with Haidar, aggravating the strained relations with the Nawab further¹¹⁷.

Till 1766, the Madras government's relations with Haidar had generally not been hostile despite occasional pinpricks as Haidar had actively courted French support. However, the Nawab of Arcot was a sworn enemy of the Mysore ruler and urged his allies the British on several occasions to wage war against him. Furthermore, claimants to the throne of Arcot like

¹¹³ Hayavadana Rao, p. 2490; Punganuri, p. 13; Robson, pp. 36-37; Wilks, p. 474.

¹¹⁴ M.M.D.L.T., p. 73.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, p. 75.

¹¹⁶ Punganuri, p. 14; Hayavadana Rao, p. 2490.

¹¹⁷ Punganuri, p. 14; Wilks, *Historical Sketches*, Vol. II, p. 2.

Raza Ali Khan had been given refuge at Mysore. So far, the British had refused the Nawab's demands for military aid. But now things began to change. Haidar's conquest of the northern Malabar led to renewed friction with the British governments of Madras and Bombay. The Madras government had maintained close relations with many of the Nair chieftains such as the Raja of Kolathiri who was defeated by Haidar. The Governor of Madras, Robert Palk, and the council which assisted him in governing the city now viewed Haidar's ambitions with alarm. Even the Bombay government was quite perturbed as Haidar's incursions in the Malabar would greatly dislocate the lucrative pepper trade of the region which was very beneficial to the company. They went so far as asking the Madras government to make a pre-emptive attack on Mysore. But Haidar made some conciliatory moves towards the East India Company. Before starting the campaign of Malabar in 1766, he had restored some territory to the Nawab of Arcot and promised peaceful relations with Madras. After his campaign against the Nairs, he confirmed all the trading privileges of the European companies trading in the Malabar region¹¹⁸.

Haidar now proposed to negotiate a new treaty with the Bombay government and asked them to send an emissary for consultations. He said that the friction between Mysore and the East India Company was mainly due to the machinations of the Nawab of Arcot Mohammad Ali Walajah and that he had no hostile intentions against the British. He stated that he would be willing to send 10,000 to 15,000 troops to the aid of Bombay in case of an attack by the Marathas or others. In return, he asked for 3000 to 4000 flintlock muskets to equip his army and also that the British troops at Bombay would support him in case of an attack¹¹⁹. The Bombay government evaded a formal treaty with him but was no doubt pleased that their access to the pepper-producing country remained secure and that Haidar had no intention to attack them. They decided to send him 4000 flintlocks and kept up a brisk trade with the Mysore ports of Mangalore and Bhatkal¹²⁰.

It is worthwhile noting that as a rule Haidar Ali was keen to avoid conflict with Europeans. Having observed the western way of war many times during his career, Haidar had a healthy respect for French and British arms. The standard tactic used by the European armies was volley firing in successive lines. When attacked by cavalry, the European troops formed a square with their flintlock muskets facing the attacking forces. The massed firing of these

¹¹⁸ *Board Consultations in Bombay*, published in B. Sheikh Ali, *British Relations with Haidar Ali*, Mysore Printing and Publishing House, Mysore, 1963, pp. 44-46.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 47-48.

¹²⁰ *Ibid*.

muskets which could be loaded and fired faster than the Indian muskets meant that the opposing horsemen could not close in to engage with the infantry. This effectively negated the cavalry tactics that had been the staple of Indian warfare since Mughal times. The retreat of the cavalry contingent was generally followed with a bayonet charge which usually caused the ranks in Indian armies to break and finally scatter. The Indian soldiers were generally trained to engage in single combat against an individual opposing soldier and so had no knowledge of a coordinated manoeuvre such as turning the opposing army's flanks. Also, the artillery employed by the Europeans was generally of a higher calibre and of a greater range than those with the Indian rulers. Haidar tried to incorporate western techniques into his army after he gained control of Mysore. However, these reforms were extremely small-scale and done in a piecemeal fashion. Only the *avval* corps of his army was drilled in the European style and officered by the French. But at a strength of 5000 soldiers, it was too small to make a real difference.

Prelude to the First Anglo-Mysore War of 1767-1769

The titular ruler of Mysore, Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar II, died in April 1766 when Haidar was busy with the Malabar campaign¹²¹. Haidar sent orders from Coimbatore to put his eldest son Nanjaraja Wodeyar on the throne. However, on returning to the capital city at the end of the year, Haidar felt that new Maharaja was exhibiting signs of discontent with his position. So he decided to tighten his grip further on the palace and the royal household. He resumed several estates that had been attached to the palace for its maintenance and the wealth that was already accumulated was seized¹²². Furthermore, Haidar increased surveillance of the royal household and its members in order to nip any conspiracy in the bud. Since the Maharaja's income was reduced by the loss of the attached lands, it seemed unlikely that he would find the resources to rise up in rebellion. As his only interaction with the Mysore public was during the Dusshera festival, the chances of rousing the population to his support seemed very minute.

The Marathas and Haidar Ali

Events now began to move with extreme rapidity. Madhava Rao Peshwa realised that he needed external help to deal with Raghunath Rao and various other rebels to his authority. He met with Nizam Ali Khan Asaf Jah II, the current Nizam of Hyderabad who had managed to

¹²¹ Wilks, Vol I, p. 478.

¹²² Ibid.

overcome his brothers' claims and secure the seat for himself, in early 1766. In February, a series of secret meetings were held between the two rulers at Kurumkhed. Though the words spoken at the meetings were never committed to writing, it is broadly agreed by historians such as Grant Duff and G.S. Sardesai that the Peshwa and the Nizam decided to enter an alliance which would initially be directed against the rebellious Maratha chieftains such as Janoji Bhonsle and then a united attack would be launched on Haidar Ali¹²³. The territories seized would be divided among themselves. Both rulers greatly feared Haidar's ambition and decided to launch a joint attack on him from the north and southwest respectively, when circumstances permitted. The Peshwa Madhava Rao I rightly regarded Haidar Ali as his most formidable opponent. Haidar had managed to defeat several Maratha generals such as Gopal Rao and Anand Rao and had made serious incursions into the Maratha-held territories. Indeed, it took the personal leadership of Madhava Rao I to check Haidar Ali's advance and push him back south across the Tungabhadra. Even then, the Peshwa had been unable to defeat the Mysore ruler completely and had not been able to reclaim all the territories. Also, Haidar was in touch with several of the Peshwa's detractors such as Raghunath Rao and Janoji, and had been offering them money and promises of support. Therefore, Madhava Rao had a well-founded suspicion that unless Haidar Ali was removed from the scene, he would remain a perpetual thorn in his side. But, he was shrewd enough to realise that he would need allies to consolidate his power and accomplish his aims.

The Nizam and Haidar Ali

The Nizam lacked a really powerful army to wage war on a large scale. His army was said to be proverbially slow and had hardly distinguished itself in battle. But his prestige as the Mughal Viceroy was so great that his word would have great weight with the Indian populations. He already had an axe to grind with Haidar Ali for supporting his rebellious brother Basalat Jung during the struggle for the throne of Hyderabad¹²⁴. Though Haidar Ali had recognized Nizam Ali Khan as the ruler of Hyderabad after the consolidation of his position and had sent him suitable gifts, the Nizam did not consider the Mysore ruler as a dependable ally. His negotiations with Madhava Rao convinced him that the Peshwa was the better bet than Haidar Ali and decided to throw his lot with him. Though both the Maratha Peshwa and the Mysore Nawab were ambitious men, the Nizam feared Haidar more. The

¹²³ James Grant Duff, *A History of the Mahrattas*, Vol. II, Longman, London, 1826, p. 183; G.S. Sardesai, *New History of the Mahrattas*, Vol. II, pp. 491-92, 532 published in Sheikh Ali, *British Relations*, p. 49; Sinha, pp. 82-83.

¹²⁴ Fortescue, p. 114.

Marathas were notorious as raiders but generally withdrew after collecting their booty and tribute. They seldom stayed long in the territories they encroached. But Haidar's style of waging war was different. He generally annexed the territories he conquered, such as Bidanur and Calicut, using ruthless force and sometimes trickery. Therefore, the Nizam felt it would be in his interest to see that Haidar was neutralised. But there was a powerful faction in his court, headed by the *Diwan* (chief minister) Rukn ud Daulah, which was in favour of an alliance with Haidar¹²⁵. This would lead a split in the decision-making process which would never be truly resolved. Nizam Ali Khan would keep vacillating between wanting to conciliate the East India Company on one hand while at the same time wanting to keep his options open with regard to Haidar and the Marathas.

It was into this maelstrom of political intrigue that the British government of Madras entered in 1766. Complicating it further were the British dealings with the Mughal court and by extension the Nizam. In late 1765, after the battle of Buxar, Robert Clive, the governor of Bengal, secured a series of concessions from the Mughal emperor Shah Alam II in Delhi¹²⁶. One of them was the ceding to the East India Company the control of five coastal districts in the Nizam's territories viz. Chicacole, Rajahmundry, Ganjam, Ellore and Guntur, which were collectively known as the Northern Circars. The governor of Madras, Robert Palk, was ordered to occupy these territories and pay the Nizam the tribute from them as stipulated. However, Nizam Ali was loath to lose the Northern Circars as it would have meant the loss of his entire coastline. As negotiations between Palk and Nizam Ali made no headway, the British troops occupied the districts by force in early 1766¹²⁷. The Nizam was so furious with this development that he even contemplated an alliance with the Marathas and Haidar Ali to retaliate against Madras¹²⁸. But this clearly was not forthcoming as the latter two sides were inimical to each other.

To counteract this move, the Madras government sent James Bouchier to negotiate with Haidar. Haidar proposed a defensive alliance with the East India Company against the Marathas and the Nizam which was turned down by the Madras government which did not want to antagonise the Nizam further and nor did it want to be embroiled in a war with the

¹²⁵ Sheikh Ali, *British Relations*, p. 54-55.

¹²⁶ H.V. Bowen, *The Business of Empire: The East India Company and Imperial Britain, 1756-1833*, CUP, New York, 2005, p. 3

¹²⁷ Hayavadana Rao, p. 2493; Wilks, Vol II, p. 3.

¹²⁸ Sheikh Ali, p. 51.

Marathas¹²⁹. But what finally tipped the government's hand was the instruction it received from Clive in Bengal in July. On July 26, Robert Clive wrote a letter to Palk stating that an alliance with Nizam Ali would confer enormous advantages on the British possessions in India as a whole. He went on to say further that if the British militarily supported the Nizam, it would keep the Marathas overawed which would prevent their raiding British territories in Bengal and Awadh as well as put them in good stead with the Mughal emperor who had also suffered at their hands. He assured of the full support of the Bengal government in this endeavour¹³⁰. Hence Robert Palk now pursued his negotiations with Nizam Ali with renewed vigour, sending Colonel Calliaud (erroneously referred to as Caillaud in Wilson and Sheikh Ali) to parley on his behalf.

The treaty was signed on November 12, 1766, between the Nizam of Hyderabad and the Government of Madras¹³¹. The main points agreed to in the negotiations were:

1. The Nizam agreed to ally with the British East India Company and relinquish the Northern Circars to the Company if he was given an annual tribute of rupees 9 lakhs and a detachment of British troops to aid him whenever required.
2. The British agreed to support the Nizam with Company troops on the condition that they would serve under British commanders and the whole contingent could be withdrawn when whenever the Madras government felt like it¹³².

Only after the treaty to this effect was signed on November 12 did the British realise that the Nizam intended to go to war with Haidar Ali¹³³. This did not affect the treaty or the resolution of the British. They agreed to send a detachment of British troops by December to assist the Nizam in his campaigns. It may be asked as why the Nizam would want British support in his campaign when he already had Maratha allies. It seems that he viewed the British troops as useful bargaining chips to overawe the Marathas and extract favourable concessions from them. The Madras army certainly was the most effective fighting force in the contingent of the Nizam.

¹²⁹ Sheikh Ali, p. 53-54.

¹³⁰ Ibid, p. 55.

¹³¹ C.U. Aitchison, *A COLLECTION OF TREATIES, ENGAGEMENTS, & SUNNUDS, RELATING TO INDIA AND NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES*, Vol. V, *CONTAINING THE TREATIES, &C., RELATING TO HYDERABAD, MYSORE, COORG, THE MADRAS PRESIDENCY, AND CEYLON*, Foreign Department Press, Calcutta, 1864, No. XII, pp. 14-18; For the text of the treaty, see Appendix.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Sheikh Ali, pp. 56-57.



Left: Nizam Ali Khan Asaf Jah II, the Nizam of Hyderabad who was one of the principal moving forces behind the formation of the hostile coalition against Mysore.

Source:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nizam_Ali_Khan,_Asaf_Jah_II#/media/File:Mir_Nizam_Ali_Khan.jpg (accessed on February 20, 2016).



Left: Mohammad Ali Khan Walajah, the Nawab of Arcot. His rivalry with Haidar Ali was one of the main causes for the deterioration of the relations between Mysore and the Madras government. Portrait by George Willison at the National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh.

Source:

http://www.nationalgalleries.org/index.php/collection/online_subject/4:323/results/40/38236/, (accessed on February 20, 2016)



Sir Robert Palk, Governor of Madras from 1763 to 1767 who agreed to join the hostile alliance against Mysore. Portrait by Thomas Beach originally published in Iain Fraser, *Haldon's Hidden Heritage*.

Source:

http://ccanw.co.uk/assets/files/Haldon_Final_Latest_Nov_09.pdf (accessed on February 20, 2016).

The question arises as to why the Madras government was willing to go to war with Haidar Ali. Though the government report after the war sought to put the onus on Haidar citing his alliance with the French and his ambitious designs across the Carnatic, he had not adopted a threatening posture against Madras. In fact he was conciliatory towards them, confirming their trading privileges in Mangalore and Malabar. Also, he had excellent relations with the Bombay government and had imported arms and exported pepper on several occasions. Nor had the British ever felt him a serious threat; they had imagined him as a bulwark against the raids of the Marathas. The historian B. Sheikh Ali advanced a plausible hypothesis for the volte-face of Madras. He said that the governor of Madras, Robert Palk, was so keen to secure an alliance with the Nizam that he decided to agree to whatever conditions that were made; and also that the letter from Clive precipitated matters¹³⁴.

However, there seems to be another reason why the Madras government was willing to risk war. The Bengal government of the East India Company had won great laurels for itself with the conquest of Bengal in 1757 and the further expansion and consolidation of its territory in 1765. This has resulted in fame and fortune for a number of East India Company officials stationed in Bengal. Compared to this, Madras was a backwater. The last major victories for it had come with the surrender of the French in the third Carnatic war. Robert Palk, who had assumed the post of governor of Madras in 1763, was an ambitious man who was not averse to making a private fortune¹³⁵. He seems to have conceived the design of territorial aggrandizement and the spreading of British influence in south India. If the British succeeded in vanquishing Haidar Ali, then it would result in great fame and fortune for the company in terms of booty seized and tribute exacted. Palk seems to have been bent on repeating the exploits of Clive in the Deccan and making a name for himself. And he had reason for confidence because since the formation of the Presidency armies, the British forces had not been checked anywhere in India. Even when Palk was replaced as Governor of Madras by Charles Bouchier in January 1767, his policy remained firmly in place.

Thus, even before his return from the Malabar, Haidar was faced with a formidable coalition of hostile powers. He desperately tried to break the coalition by sending emissaries to Madras with offers of peace. But he received equivocal assurances that the Madras government had no hostile designs¹³⁶. Haidar was too shrewd to take these at face value. Aware of the alliance

¹³⁴ Sheikh Ali, pp. 59-60.

¹³⁵ Ibid, p. 63.

¹³⁶ Ibid, p. 57.

between the Peshwa and the Nizam, Haidar knew that Madhava Rao would lose no time in invading Mysore territories at the start of the campaigning season. Along with his incursions to the north would come the attacks by the Nizam and his British allies on the southwest. Haidar decided to take the maximum number of precautions against the impending attack and at the same time use diplomacy and force to try to break up the hostile alliance of powers arrayed against him. Therefore, the stage was set for the Anglo-Mysore War of 1767-1769.

A Note on Contemporary Military Technology

The unsettled conditions of the 18th century resulted in a highly militarised society in the Indian subcontinent. The scholar Dirk Kolff has made an excellent study of the Indian military labour market in his book *Naukar, Rajput and Sepoy*¹³⁷. Though this is mainly a study of north India, the conditions and in particular the weaponry used were applicable to south India also. Most people who could afford it possessed some rudimentary armaments ranging from old matchlocks to simple pikes and staves. Any chief of consequence, however minor, maintained a band of retainers who would serve as mercenaries for hire¹³⁸. Thus there was the need of a secure base for stationing these irregular troops and so the whole countryside was dotted with fortified structures of various sizes which were located on peaks so that the approach of an enemy would be detected early and repelled quickly. This way, the garrison could command all the important routes into and out of the territory surrounding the fort. If any emergency occurred, the fort would have a panoramic view of the situation and send troops to the appropriate location.

It is worth noting some details about contemporary fortifications. The major forts which served as residences of important potentates were built of stone in an ornate style and included bastions and towers etc. such as the forts at Krishnagiri, Bangalore as well as Fort Saint George. However, most defensive structures inland were walls and bastions of kneaded clay enclosing towns and villages¹³⁹. Though of an unappealing appearance, these makeshift forts were very hard and durable. They could resist the impact of most contemporary cannonballs. Therefore, the only practical methods of capturing forts were the use of mines through tunnelling, as at Hoskote by Haidar; or through siege warfare. It was already well-

¹³⁷ D.H.A. Kolff, *Naukar, Rajput and Sepoy: The Ethnohistory of the Military Labour Market in Hindustan, 1450-1850*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1990.

¹³⁸ G.J. Bryant, *Asymmetric Warfare: The British Experience in Eighteenth-Century India*, *The Journal of Military History*, Vol. 68, No. 2 (April 2004), p. 438.

¹³⁹ Wilks, Vol. I, pp. 437-438.

known since the 1500s that loosely compacted earth would deflect cannon shots¹⁴⁰. Many of the inland forts such as Ambur, Vaniyambadi, and Hoskote were of this construction which was a combination of practicality and improvisation. Usually, the commanders of besieging armies resorted to outright bribery and generous terms of surrender in order to get the garrison of the fort to capitulate. Often the surrendering commander would be allowed to retain command of the fort with his troops which would be supplemented by overseers appointed by the conquering army. Hence, sieges during this period were seldom very long in spite of the inherent strength of the fort.

Each Indian power maintained a regular army which was a full-time force and was paid by the state. This was supplemented by an irregular force which was levied from the surrounding countryside during a campaign. The latter was a part-time militia which was raised only during wartime and was expected to live off the plunder obtained from the enemy territories though they were paid a nominal sum by the army commanders. The regular forces were often better equipped than the irregular forces. They were provided firearms by the state for use in battle. Most often these were matchlock guns which had been a staple in Indian warfare since the 16th century¹⁴¹. The matchlock was also known as *banduq* or *tugang* in India¹⁴². Though these were obsolete in Europe they were still prevalent in India due to the simplicity and cost-effectiveness of their manufacture. Gunsmiths making matchlocks had evolved into a widespread cottage industry in India by the 1700s¹⁴³. Even irregulars were also sometimes armed with these weapons. The main drawback of this weapon was that it took a long time to load and fire, during which interval the user would be vulnerable to enemy attacks.

In contrast, the irregular militias had to arrange for their own weapons and equipment. The reasonably well-off irregulars were armed with matchlocks of varying quality. Often these would be old and decrepit specimens which had been handed down over generations. The remaining multitude would be armed with whatever was available ranging from bows and arrows to bamboo pikes to their personal knives and daggers. Though they were of little value in frontal combat, they were useful as shock troops in order to surprise the enemy and also to plunder his equipment and baggage. An added advantage was that they knew the countryside

¹⁴⁰ William H. McNeill, *The Pursuit of Power: Technology, Armed Force, and Society since A.D. 1000*, University of Chicago Press, USA, 1982, p. 100.

¹⁴¹ Bryant, *Asymmetric Warfare*, p. 438.

¹⁴² Irvine, p. 103.

¹⁴³ *Ibid*, p. 105.

well and therefore were invaluable as scouts. Their main value was as skirmishers in order to wage guerrilla warfare on the opposing forces and wear the latter down through constant ambushes, particularly on the supply lines¹⁴⁴. However, the main disadvantage was that they lacked discipline and hence were unpredictable in the heat of battle. Also, they would slow down the marching speed of the army as they lacked any transport or animals themselves and had to commute on foot. However, the bulk of the armies in India was composed of the camp followers i.e the sutlers, servants, merchants, entertainers and, in the case of the nobility, the harem women¹⁴⁵.

The cavalry remained the main striking force in the Indian armies during the 18th century¹⁴⁶. It was also a mark of status among the Indian nobility during the period. However, by the mid-1700s, the traditional routes for import of good quality horses i.e. from Central Asia through the mountain passes and from Iran and Arabia through the seas had been cut off from the regional powers in the Deccan, and hence they could no longer field heavy cavalry with greater striking power. Therefore, warfare in the Deccan during this period relied heavily on the use of mountain ponies (*tattus*) which could be used only for light cavalry as these ponies lacked the strength and endurance of the overseas breeds of horses. But by this time the traditional cavalry tactic of advancing and engaging the enemy with swords and bows had been rendered obsolete by the newer European firearms which could engage the cavalry at a longer distance. Therefore, the regional powers like the Marathas and Mysore used their horses mainly for harassment purposes such as attacking isolated detachments of the enemy or his baggage train. The horses were also useful as scouts to gather information on the opposing forces. There were a few elephants in each Indian army as well. Though they were of no use for attacking, they served the role of observation posts and also were useful to haul cannons and other equipage¹⁴⁷. Also, it was a mark of status to be seated on an elephant.

Artillery was another neglected component of the Indian powers. Most of the rulers in the subcontinent relied on heavy cast iron cannons which had been involved in warfare on the subcontinent since the time of the early Mughals¹⁴⁸. However, these had long been superseded by wrought iron cannons used by the Europeans as these cannons had greater

¹⁴⁴ Bryant, pp. 438-439.

¹⁴⁵ Jos J.L. Gommans, *Indian Warfare and Afghan Innovation in the Eighteenth Century*, in *Warfare and Weaponry in South Asia, 1000-1800*, ed. by Jos J.L. Gommans and Dirk H.A. Kolff, OUP, New Delhi, 2003, p. 366.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 371; M.M.D.L.T., p. 157.

¹⁴⁸ Irvine, *Army of the Indian Moghuls*, p. 115.

durability and range. Also, the Indian rulers had antiquated ideas of using artillery. Robert Orme in his account of the Carnatic Wars said that the Indians usually fired their cannons once every fifteen minutes while the Europeans could manage to fire their cannons five or six times per minute¹⁴⁹. Haidar Ali was one of the first Indian rulers to adopt this new technology. Shortly after becoming the *faujdar* of Dindigul, he set up a foundry with French gunsmiths in order to manufacture new cannons and muskets¹⁵⁰. However, the number of cannons and muskets manufactured remained small and this explains his need to have to constantly import arms from other sources. Complementing these were the traditional Indian firearms such as the *shaturnal* and the *gingall*. The *shaturnal* was a small cannon placed on a swivel on a camel's back which was operated by two seated men. It threw a ball of about 100 g in weight over a considerable distance¹⁵¹. The *gingall*, also called *jingal*, was a swivel cannon which was transported on an elephant and then set up on the ground and fired¹⁵². Also, rockets called *bans* were in common use among the Indian powers during that time though they were virtually unknown to the Europeans¹⁵³. These basically consisted of bamboo tubes filled with slow-burning explosive as propellant. Stalks of bamboo attached to the tubes provided stabilisation during flight. These were especially effective against cavalry as horses which were not experienced with rocket fire would panic and run helter-skelter, scattering the formation.

Since the mid-1600s, Europe had witnessed a tremendous transformation in military organization and techniques of waging war along with new military equipment. This phenomenon has been collectively called as the 'Military Revolution' by the historian Michael Roberts in his article *The Military Revolution: 1560-1660* (1955) and was popularised by Geoffrey Parker in his study *The Military Revolution, 1500-1800: Military Innovation and the Rise of the West* (1988)¹⁵⁴. The European powers ensured greater uniformity among their armies and relied mainly on the infantry and artillery with improved discipline and advanced weaponry. Their armies consisted of disciplined firepower by infantry that was regularly drilled in conjunction with artillery¹⁵⁵. The soldiers were usually

¹⁴⁹ Robert Orme, *A History of the Military Transactions in Indostan, From the year MDCCXLV*, Vol. I, Pharaoh & Co., Madras, 1861, p. 74.

¹⁵⁰ Hayavadana Rao, p. 2473; M.M.D.L.T., p. 42.

¹⁵¹ Irvine, p. 136.

¹⁵² Ibid, p. 135.

¹⁵³ Ibid, p. 149, Wilks, Vol. II, p. 27.

¹⁵⁴ Geoffrey Parker, *The Military Revolution, 1500-1800: Military Innovation and the Rise of the West*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1988, pp. 1, 147.

¹⁵⁵ Jos J.L. Gommans, *Indian Warfare*, p. 365.

armed with flintlock muskets fitted with bayonets which enabled them to defend themselves against cavalry¹⁵⁶.

The British army in particular was armed solely with the 'Brown Bess' flintlock musket. This revolutionary firearm used a flint lighter to explode the powder and hence dispensed with the need of a lighted match that was necessary for the matchlock. Thus it had twice the rate of fire than that of the standard Indian muskets. The Brown Bess was also fitted with the socket bayonet which could be used in hand-to-hand combat or against cavalry. As these were standard issue firearms, they were of much higher quality than the equipment of the Indian forces and hence could last much longer. This was a product of the Military Revolution initiated in Europe since the 17th century. The infantry was subjected to regular drills to improve discipline and coordination¹⁵⁷. There was great emphasis on marksmanship and the ability to manoeuvre in order to preserve the army. As a result, the system of volley firing had been introduced where the infantrymen would form successive ranks and then fire in unison. This caused a devastating barrage which wreaked havoc on the opposition¹⁵⁸. Since this system had proved so effective against the cavalry armies of Europe, it was assumed that it would succeed in India also where the preponderant military forces consisted of mounted soldiers such as those of the Marathas or the Rohillas.

The manufacture of artillery had also undergone great changes during this period. The Europeans had started using wrought iron cannons that were manufactured using the forge welded process while Indians used cast iron cannons as had been the common practice since Mughal times¹⁵⁹. As wrought iron is much more durable and malleable than cast iron, the European cannons were much superior in range and endurance compared to the Indian cannons. Also they could be manufactured in a uniform manner to preset calibres. Usually the lightest cannon would be a 3-pounder while the heaviest would be a 16-pounder. The lighter cannons were used against troops in the battlefield while heavier guns were used in sieges. However, the larger calibre cannons had the disadvantage of heavy recoiling which made them hazardous. Generally siege cannons were used in the style of trench warfare first

¹⁵⁶ Jos J.L. Gommans, *Indian Warfare*, p. 365.

¹⁵⁷ Bryant, p. 440.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ C.P. Kingsbury, *AN ELEMENTARY TREATISE ON ARTILLERY AND INFANTRY*, G.P. Putnam, New York, 1855, p. 60; Gurcharan Singh Sandhu, *A Military History of Medieval India*, Vision Books, New Delhi, 2003, pp. 606, 796-797.

practised by the French engineer Sebastian de Vauban in the 1670s¹⁶⁰. In this system, a series of parallel trenches were dug closer and closer to the fort. The artillery was then placed on the mounds near the trenches and the bombardment commenced. This served a dual purpose. The trenches protected the infantry and the supply lines from the firing of the fort's defenders; and the mounds increased the trajectory of the cannons, enabling them to fire over the battlements and into the fort.

A Comparison of the Opposing Forces

The forces at the disposal of Haidar

By the year 1767, Haidar's dominions consisted of the kingdom of Mysore proper; the nearby city of Bangalore; the Carnatic country north of Madurai; Sira; Dodaballapur and Chikkaballapur; the Kanara territory of Bidanur; and the northern Malabar. In the south, the chain of mountains formed by the convergence of the Eastern and Western Ghats formed a natural defence. However, in the north the plain and level countryside with its scrubland formed an open road for incursions. In each key city Haidar had built a fortress which he garrisoned with troops under trusted commanders. However, most of these troops were levies from the surrounding countryside and therefore their loyalty was suspect. The forts had trenches, bastions and revetments usually made of kneaded clay¹⁶¹. Haidar now decided to keep them in good repair in view of the anticipated invasion. The overall command of the sectors north of Mysore was vested with Mir Raza Ali Khan, Haidar's brother in law, who resided in the fort of Sira with his garrison.

Haidar possessed an army of more than 180,000 men which included 25,000 cavalry. However, his regular troops which were used as strike formations amounted to around 55,000 men inclusive of 18,000 cavalry. There was also a force of 8,000 Bedars and Pindaris which were used to mop up enemy resistance and as skirmishers. The infantry consisted of 20,000 troops of which a large number were Topasses. They were armed with European flintlock muskets which were more accurate and had a greater rate of fire than matchlocks. The officers of these detachments were armed with pistols and swords as befitted their rank. The other foot soldiers were armed with matchlocks and spears. The Europeans in the army numbered around 750. They consisted of two companies of hussars (mounted soldiers armed

¹⁶⁰ *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, <http://www.britannica.com/biography/Sebastien-Le-Prestre-de-Vauban> [accessed on October 2, 2015].

¹⁶¹ M.M.D.L.T., p. 156.

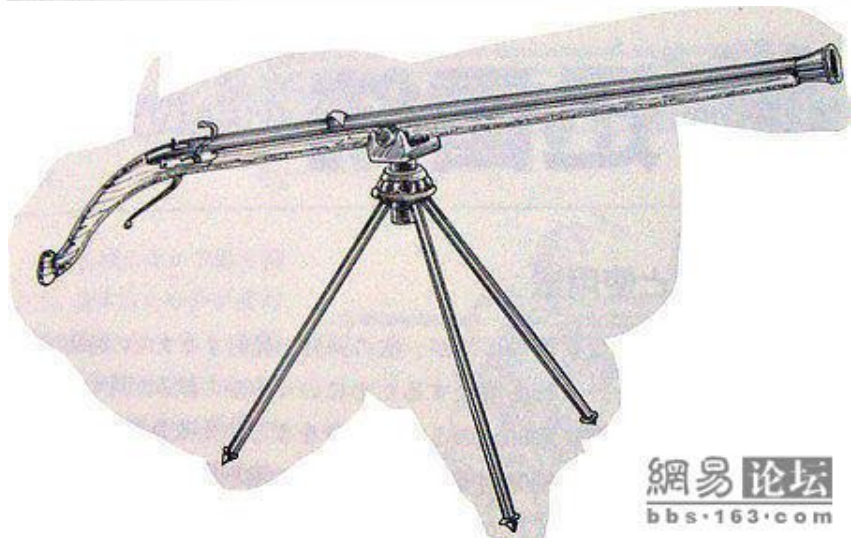
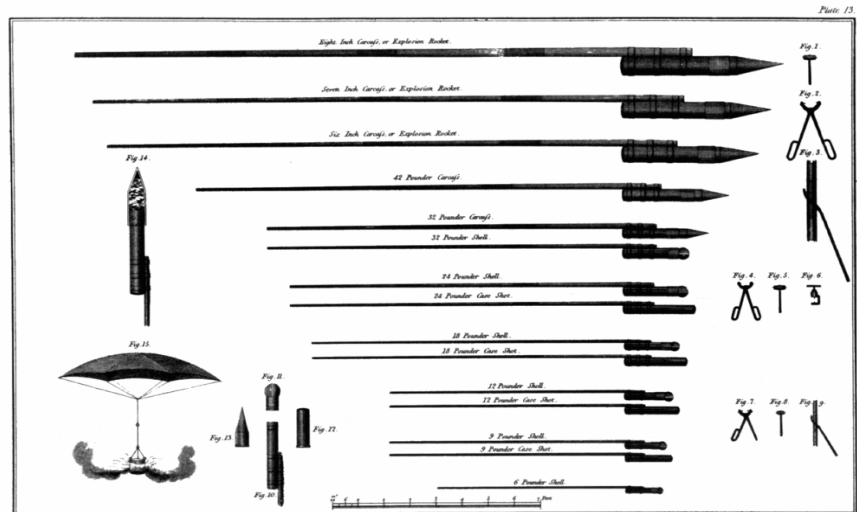


Top: Forge-welded cannon used in the Mysore Army of Tipu Sultan now on display at the Government Museum, Chennai.

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tipu_Sultan#/media/File:Tippu%27s_cannon.jpg (accessed on February 20, 2016).

Bottom: Weapons, including matchlock guns, swords and daggers on display at the Dariya Daulat Bagh in Srirangapatna. Source: <http://mostaqueali.blogspot.in/2015/06/tipu-sultans-mysore.html> (accessed on February 21, 2016).

The cannons and other weapons in Haidar Ali's army would have been very similar as the forge-welding technology was used by him and matchlocks were a staple of Indian armies since Mughal times.



Left: *Juzail-bardar* (rocket handler) in Tipu Sultan's army. He would have played a similar role in Haidar Ali's army. Portrait by Robert Home. Source: <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O68017/painting/> (accessed on February 20, 2016).

Right Top: Rockets in Tipu Sultan's armoury which would have existed in Haidar Ali's armoury also. Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_rockets#/media/File:Congreve_rockets.gif (accessed on February 20, 2016).

Right Bottom: The swivel gun or *jingal/gingall*. Source: bbs.163.com (accessed on February 20, 2016).

with muskets) of 125 men each, 250 men employed as artillerymen and another 250 men who served as officers in the companies of the grenadiers and the Topasses¹⁶².

There was also a camel corps in Haidar's army numbering about 3000 men. It was equipped with *shaturnals*. The soldiers operating these weapons were excellent marksmen and were used to ambush enemy troops. The corps had the honour of having an ensign for every ten men¹⁶³. Along with them were the *juzail-burdars* or the rocket-men whose job was to ambush enemy formations with rockets. Around this time a troop of Arabian mercenaries armed with bows and arrows arrived in Srirangapatna and offered their services to Haidar. He formed them into two companies-one with a red uniform which he took under his command and the other was given to the European commandant¹⁶⁴. Haidar also possessed a fleet since his conquest of the Malabar. It consisted of a ship having 50 cannons bought from the Danes; three other ships of 32 guns each; eighteen small galleys which could be rowed or sailed and carried 14 guns each; and about 20 large galliots which could carry 80 men with 2 cannons. This fleet at best could have been employed in harassing the shipping of the enemy. However, at the beginning of 1767, it was docked in Bombay harbour for maintenance under an agreement between Haidar and the Bombay government¹⁶⁵. Haidar also employed a small contingent of 6000 men which had been gathered by Mahfuz Khan, the brother of Muhammad Ali, the Nawab of Arcot. Though Haidar did not have many expectations from this force, it seemed useful in order to instigate desertions in Arcot's forces.

The forces of the Marathas

According to a Portuguese report in 1787 the Peshwa could take to the field with a cavalry of 80,000 to 100,000 horses along with 10,000 infantry and 40-50 cannons¹⁶⁶. The mainstay of the Maratha army was its swift cavalry. They generally overran the enemy territory and laid waste to the country surrounding the fort, forcing its surrender. Maratha recruits preferred to be cavalymen as a mark of status. The cavalry was of two types- *bargir* and *silahadar*. The *bargir* horsemen would be provided horses by the state while the *silahadars* had to get horses and equipment at their own expense from outside. Around half of the cavalry was armed with matchlocks while the other half was armed with spears and swords¹⁶⁷. The infantry was

¹⁶² M.M.D.L.T., p. 157-158.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, p. 159.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, p. 161.

¹⁶⁶ G.S. Sandhu, *A Military History*, p. 790.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, p. 791.

armed in a similar style. It mainly consisted of mercenaries and levies. They were generally used for skirmishing and for mop-up operations. The artillery consisted generally of cannons of small calibre which were generally manned by European mercenaries. However, there was a serious drawback to the Maratha armies. Their official pay scale was low, around a few dozen rupees. Maratha armies were expected to live off the land during campaigns and were recompensed with the plunder and tribute generated during the wars. As a result, the troops could be prone to desertion. Also, the Marathas do not seem to have been able to incorporate artillery and infantry to their military doctrine. So they usually relied on speed and surprise in their assaults and captured fortresses mainly by escalade using ladders rather than through undermining or using cannons¹⁶⁸. As a result, they were mainly raiders than conquerors. Also, the Marathas were generally ineffective against the drilled armies of the Europeans¹⁶⁹. But they made up for that in sheer numbers and relied on a scorched-earth campaign in order to achieve success.

The forces of the Nizam and the British

The forces of Nizam Ali, the Nizam of Hyderabad, were estimated at 100,000 strong. But this included a large number of noncombatants. Hence the effective fighting strength was around 40,000 men including 30,000 cavalry and 10,000 infantry. There were only 2000 muskets in his army with most of the infantry being armed with matchlocks. The infantry was under the command of Abdurrehman Khan but its pay was already in arrears. The cavalry consisted largely of the musters of the individual commanders. Hence, the Nizam had only nominal command over this vital section. As most of the cavalry were *silahadar* horse, they were unwilling to risk their expensive mounts in pitched battle. Along with the Nizam came the contingents of his brother Basalat Jung and those of the Nawabs of Savanur and Kadapah. The army had a number of merchants, women and servants as camp followers. This huge force was extremely unwieldy and could be ambushed easily. The army was also equipped with old brass cannons provided by the French during the Carnatic wars. However, ammunition was lacking and the gunners, who were mostly Indians, were not very skilled¹⁷⁰.

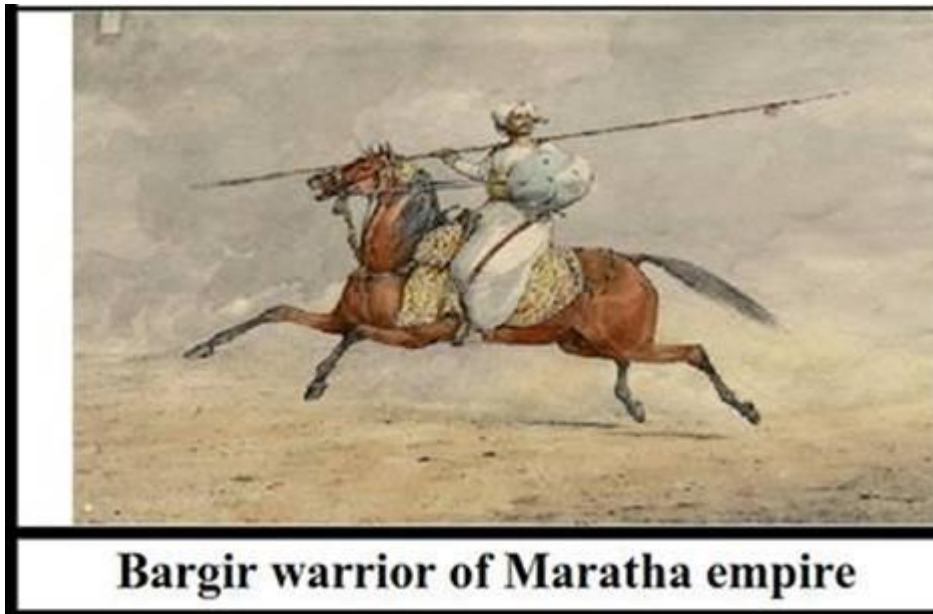
¹⁶⁸ G.S. Sandhu, p. 791; Irvine, p. 281.

¹⁶⁹ Sandhu, pp. 791-795.

¹⁷⁰ M.M.D.L.T., pp. 159-161.



Left: A Topass family from Java. The Topasses ranged across the Indian Ocean and were valued as mercenaries both by Indian powers and the British. Portrait by Johannes Nieuhof. Source: A. and J. Churchill: *Voyages and travels to the East-Indies*, 1732, London, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=12339300> (accessed on March 1, 2016).



Bargir warrior of Maratha empire

Above: Illustration of a *bargir* horseman carrying a lance in the Maratha cavalry. Source: vinaykumarimp.blogspot.com (accessed on February 22, 2016).

The British were in the process of expansion in India during the 1760s¹⁷¹. They possessed the whole province of Bengal as well as substantial parts of Awadh¹⁷². Besides this, they controlled the eastern coastline from Orissa to Madras as well as the Konkan coast in the west. They also possessed Bombay as well as Surat and Cambay along with several forts and factories scattered throughout India. Using the proceeds of the land revenue of Bengal and the trade revenues of other establishments, the East India Company was able to build a much larger army with which they could intervene further in Indian politics against states like the Marathas and Mysore¹⁷³. Also it had the support of the British navy that was expanding at a phenomenal rate, with which it could send troops and supplies to reinforce their settlements throughout India¹⁷⁴. De la Tour said that the East India Company armies in India now numbered to more than 90,000 men¹⁷⁵. This figure is reasonable considering that in 1805, the British army in India totalled around 155,000 men, including 24,500 Europeans¹⁷⁶. The bulk of these were the locally recruited Indian troops or *sepoys*. They were often recruited on a voluntary basis by the Company's agents at its factories in north and south India. They were formed into companies and battalions and trained in the European manner. But they wore their own clothes and had their own customs; and each unit was commanded by officers of its own region or group¹⁷⁷. Another important component of the army was the Topasses who were valued for their fighting skills. They also acted as overseers of Indian troops to make sure that the latter would maintain discipline and would not desert. All these units were under the overall command of European officers¹⁷⁸.

De la Tour said that there were eight regiments of British infantry, each having one thousand European soldiers, in India. Of them, three regiments were stationed at Madras, three in Bengal and two in Bombay. There were also 1200 artillerymen formed in various companies of one hundred men each at different establishments. The Indian troops, called *sepoys*,

¹⁷¹ Note: By the end of 1600s, the policy of the British East India Company became more pronounced to expand its territorial interests as well as its influence and also protect its enclaves in India and elsewhere. This involved the use of both diplomacy and force. See Philip J. Stern, *The Company State: Corporate Sovereignty and the Early Modern Foundations of the British Empire in India*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2011, pp. 121, 134.

¹⁷² C.A. Bayly, p. 45-46.

¹⁷³ Ibid, p. 46.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid; Stern, p. 186.

¹⁷⁵ M.M.D.L.T., p. 162; Bowen, *Business of Empire*, pp. 3-4.

¹⁷⁶ Chandar S. Sundaram, *Reviving a 'Dead Letter': Military Indianization and the Ideology of Anglo-India, 1885-91*, in *The British Raj and Its Indian Armed Forces, 1857-1939*, ed. By Partha Sarathi Gupta and Anirudh Deshpande, OUP, Delhi, 2002, p. 47.

¹⁷⁷ Orme, *Military Transactions*, p. 80; Stuart Reid and Gary Embleton, *Armies of the East India Company, 1750-1850*, Osprey Publishing Ltd., New York, 2009, p. 19.

¹⁷⁸ Orme, p. 80; Rosen, pp. 174-175.

consisted of sixty four regiments of one thousand men each with thirty regiments stationed in Madras¹⁷⁹. However, this figure may be exaggerated by the French writer who was eager to inflate the size of the British army while correspondingly diminishing the Mysore army. As he was in the employ of Haidar Ali and was hostile to the British, he naturally would want to enhance Haidar's reputation at the cost of the British by saying that the Mysore ruler had defeated them with fewer troops inspite of their great strength. But it is true that the bulk of the army was concentrated in Madras since the Third Carnatic War as a deterrent against French attack¹⁸⁰. W.J. Wilson said that at Madras there were 3 battalions of Europeans, roughly corresponding to 1000 men each which was the size of a regiment, along with 10 battalions of Indian infantry and 3 companies of artillery¹⁸¹. In a recent study, the writer Stuart Reid said that there were 3 battalions of Europeans and 19 battalions of Indian troops¹⁸².

The East India Company also had a cavalry of around 4000 men out of which 1200 were stationed at Madras. According to De la Tour, the cavalry was mostly Indian with 400 Europeans in charge¹⁸³. The British historians did not give the size of this force but Wilson said it usually operated in groups of 30 horses under the command of a British officer, a figure which also agrees with De la Tour¹⁸⁴. Stuart Reid also said that a cavalry of 3 troops was formed in Madras in 1761¹⁸⁵. Each troop consisted of around 100 Europeans. The main purpose of this cavalry contingent was to defend the artillery positions and the baggage trains against enemy attack. Due to its small size, it could not be used for any major offensive purpose. The East India Company was loath to incur the expense of maintaining a large cavalry corps and so usually relied on the Indian powers to supply them with horses. Also, the military revolution in Europe had made the infantry very effective against cavalry attacks and so the Company felt that a large standing cavalry corps was unnecessary. Thus the British possessed at least around 15,000 troops in the vicinity of Madras. The bulk of these were Indians who were officered by Europeans. Along with this was the contingent of Nawab Muhammad Ali of Arcot which was mainly cavalry which was much inferior in quality

¹⁷⁹ M.M.D.L.T., pp. 162-163.

¹⁸⁰ Stuart Reid op. cit., p. 19.

¹⁸¹ W.J. Wilson, *HISTORY OF THE MADRAS ARMY*, Vol. I, Government Press, Madras, 1882, p. 215.

¹⁸² Reid, p. 16, 22.

¹⁸³ M.M.D.L.T., pp. 162-163; Wilson, p. 205.

¹⁸⁴ Wilson, p. 215.

¹⁸⁵ Reid, p. 24.

compared to that of the Marathas or Mysore as it consisted of weak horses and was lacking in discipline¹⁸⁶.

¹⁸⁶ Reid, p. 24; M.M.D.L.T., pp. 162-163

THE EARLY YEARS

- 1: Peon, 1740
- 2: Madras European, 1748
- 3: European officer, 1750s



Above: Illustration of the soldiers of the Madras army in the 1750s. Source: Reid, *Armies of the East India Company*, p. 25.



Above: The Brown Bess flintlock musket which the standard infantry firearm of the British army in the 18th century. It had a rate of fire of twice that of the Indian matchlocks. Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brown_Bess#/media/File:Brown_Bess.png (accessed on February 22, 2016).



Above: A 9-pounder cannon used by the British army in the 18th century. Filled with shot, it could prove devastating against charges by the massed ranks of the opposing army. Source: <http://waterloo200.org/200-object/british-cannon-9-pounder/> (accessed on February 22, 2016).

Chapter III

THE OPENING PHASE OF THE WAR: THE MARATHAS, THE NIZAM AND THE MADRAS ARMY ATTACK MYSORE

Historians of Mysore such as Mark Wilks, C. Hayavadana Rao, N.K. Sinha and B. Sheikh Ali conventionally mark the start of the First Anglo-Mysore War in the middle of 1767 with Haidar's invasion of the Madras territories, though hostilities began earlier. This is unsurprising as far as the British historians are concerned as they wanted to paint the Madras government as the victim rather than the aggressor; also, extensive British involvement started only after that invasion. Later historians have followed this chronology in dating the war. However, at this time Haidar Ali was generally wary of attacking European troops and settlements, aware of their superiority in discipline and armament. But by November 1766, the ruler of Mysore faced a hostile coalition comprising of the Peshwa, the Nizam and the Madras government intent on attacking and defeating him. Thus the war was forced upon Haidar Ali causing him to retaliate though each opposing party waged its campaign individually. The subsequent events of the war can be seen as a reaction to the actions of the hostile alliance. A parallel can be drawn with the reactionary coalitions drawn up against Napoleon where the powers opposed to France did not coordinate with each other and thus were defeated by the French emperor in a piecemeal fashion. Therefore it is more accurate to say that the war started at the beginning of the year 1767 with the invasion of the Maratha forces led by Peshwa Madhava Rao I.

The Invasion of the Marathas

The invasion of the territories of Haidar Ali by Madhava Rao I began in January 1767. The series of events during this invasion are barely covered in the works of the British historians James Grant Duff, Mark Wilks and John Briggs, all of whom only mention the bare facts without any details. Haidar's chronicler, Mir Hussain Kirmani, produced a very confused account of the Maratha invasion in which he conflated the invasion of 1767 with the earlier invasion in 1765 and the later invasion in 1770, so much so that he said that Madhava Rao I had died during the invasion of 1770 and his uncle Tryambak Rao was leading the troops¹⁸⁷. In fact, the Peshwa died during the Maratha invasions of 1772 and Tryambak Rao led later invasions during the 1770s. Also, he attributed many imaginary victories to Haidar during the

¹⁸⁷ Kirmani, *HISTORY OF HYDUR NAIK*, pp. 178-190.

campaign. So his work cannot be accorded great weight. But other sources such as the letters of the Peshwa and the records of the Peshwa *Daftar* give more information on the happenings. Also, the accounts of De la Tour and Ramachandra Rao are much more detailed and reliable with regard to this period.

Madhava Rao I apparently distrusted the Nizam after his alliance with the East India Company which would put the latter in a much stronger bargaining position. His *vakil* in Madras hinted as much to governor Bouchier who tried to alleviate suspicions and asked for a contingent of cavalry from the Peshwa¹⁸⁸. Also, the Hyderabad army was supposed to be proverbially slow which could hardly match the swift-moving Maratha horsemen. Therefore, the Peshwa decided to launch an attack without waiting for his purported ally. Madhava Rao's immediate aims were two-fold. First, he wanted to check Haidar Ali's growing power by wresting back the territories the Mysore ruler had earlier seized from Murari Rao Ghorpade. Secondly, he wanted to enforce the payment of tribute which had been agreed upon since Haidar's Bidanur campaign. The Peshwa was aware that Haidar was a powerful and resourceful adversary. So he personally led a large army against the Mysore forces. De la Tour put its number at 150,000 which seems to be an exaggeration¹⁸⁹. An army of 70,000 to 80,000 fighting men is more plausible. Since his earlier encounter with the Marathas in 1765, Haidar had undertaken strong defensive works in the northern territories of his kingdom. A series of forts had been set up at strategic locations like Hoskote, Bidanur, and Madhugiri with their command centre at the fort of Sira which was under the command of Haidar's brother-in-law Mir Ali Raza Khan (not to be confused with the son of Chanda Sahib), and all the forts were garrisoned with seasoned troops and were well-stocked with provisions to withstand sieges. It was hoped that these forts could thwart Maratha attacks; or at least hold out against them till reinforcements could be sent.

Madhava Rao's plan for invasion was brilliant in conception. Instead of attacking the Mysore territories from the north at places like Bidanur and Chitradurga, he attacked from the east by marching across the Nizam's domains and bypassing Haidar's main strongholds in the north. The Nizam was unlikely to oppose the march of his supposed ally, the Peshwa, who could thus cover great distances in a short time and make his attack on an axis along Raichur,

¹⁸⁸ Letter from John Call to Robert Palk dated March 19, *REPORT ON THE PALK MANUSCRIPTS IN THE POSSESSION OF MRS. BANNATYNE OF HALDON, DEVON*, compiled by Henry Davidson Love, His Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1922, pp. 23-24.

¹⁸⁹ M.M.D.L.T., p. 116.

Adoni, and Gauribidanur to Madhugiri to the east of Bangalore. Another reason for choosing this route seems to have been because these territories were formerly held by Murari Rao. Also, the thick vegetation provided adequate fodder for the mounts of the army. The Maratha leaders included Tryambak Rao and Hari Pant Phadke along with the Peshwa¹⁹⁰. The invasion began in full swing in early January. The usual tactics used by the Marathas were to lay siege to the fortress and devastate the surrounding countryside in order to cut off supplies for the besieged garrison. If that failed, the Marathas would bombard and then escalate the battlements of the fort. By the middle of the month, Raichur and Adoni had been compelled to make peace by paying a tribute of three lakhs of rupees each¹⁹¹. However, these districts were not occupied as Madhava Rao wished to press on into Haidar's main territories of Sira and Hoskote in the Carnatic Balaghaut. As was common in Indian warfare of the period, the garrison of the fort would be released after the capture of the fort along with its arms and supplies. The Marathas were mainly content to seize tribute and arms and supplies from the forts and then, leaving a skeleton garrison called a *thana* behind, would press on ahead¹⁹².

By January 16, the Marathas had crossed the Tungabhadra where they were supposed to meet and join forces with the army of Basalatjung. During this period, armies usually crossed rivers at their shallow points as the existing bridges were too narrow and too weak to allow passage to a large number of men. But the Nizam's troops, with their usual lethargy, failed to meet the Maratha army. By the second week of February, Rayadurga and several other districts in the Carnatic submitted to the Maratha generals like Bagaji Raghunath, Mahadaji Ballal and Hari Ballal and agreed to pay tribute. Usually these ranged from several thousands to several lakhs¹⁹³. The Maratha army was dependent on the tribute in order to pay their troops and also to provide supplies. Also, a contingent of 7000 cavalry from the Nizam joined them at this time but had little effect on the ensuing events. Haidar decided to send out tentative feelers for negotiations through his agents and offered to pay twenty lakhs of rupees. Madhava Rao stated that peace could be made only after Haidar paid the tribute of thirty lakh rupees¹⁹⁴. While the negotiations were going on, the Marathas continued to press their attacks

¹⁹⁰ John Briggs, *Secret Correspondence of the Court of the Peshwa, Madhu Rao, from the Year 1761 to 1772*, published in the *Transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 1829, p. 126; Sinha, *Haidar Ali*, p. 85.

¹⁹¹ G.S. Sardesai, *Selections from the Peshwa Daftar, 37: The Karnatak Expeditions of Madhavarao I (1761-1772)*, Government Central Press, Bombay, 1934, p. 103.

¹⁹² Kirmani, op. cit., p. 167.

¹⁹³ Ibid, pp. 104-107.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

into the Carnatic. By the end of February, Madhugiri had fallen along with Gauribidanur¹⁹⁵. The Marathas freed Rani Virammaji, who had been imprisoned at Madhugiri by Haidar after the conquest of Bidanur, and sent her to Pune but she died along the way¹⁹⁶. As no agreement was reached for a truce with the agents of Haidar, the Marathas decided to press on to Sira, the main fort in the region which was under the command of Mir Ali Raza Khan, the brother-in-law of Haidar who had been entrusted with looking after the entire region near the Tungabhadra.

Haidar was no doubt perturbed by the Marathas' swift advance. He decided to use scorched-earth tactics to check their onslaught¹⁹⁷. He issued orders to his officials to breach the embankments of the water tanks when the Maratha forces approached as the inundation and the slush would impede the cavalry movements. All the forage and scrub along the route was burnt, including the thatched roofs of houses and the watering holes were poisoned with the milk hedge plant, the juice of which caused severe irritation on contact with the skin. All the grain available was seized and that which could not be sent to the main forts was buried underground. The villagers and the cattle on the route between Haidar's territories and Madhugiri were sent away to the hills and the forests so that the Marathas could not seize them. The main aim of this procedure was to deny any supplies of food and water for the invading forces¹⁹⁸. But this was insufficient to stop the battle-hardened Marathas. The Marathas were adept at locating hidden sources of grain and fodder by dint of long experience and dug alternative waterholes to supply themselves with water. Raiding parties were able to locate villagers and cattle hiding in the surrounding countryside and force them to give up their possessions¹⁹⁹. The Marathas continued their advance towards Hoskote, Kolar and Sira.

By March 8, the invaders had besieged Sira. Wilks said that Mir Ali Raza Khan, the commander of the fort and a brother-in-law of Haidar, had four thousand cavalry and six thousand infantry at his disposal²⁰⁰. The correspondence of the Peshwa gives a vivid account of the battle that developed. The commander of the fort (who is called Mir Hyder in the

¹⁹⁵ Briggs, *Secret Correspondence*, p. 126; Robson, p. 39.

¹⁹⁶ Briggs, p. 127; Grant Duff, op. cit., p. 193; Robson, p. 39; *Selections from the Peshwa Daftar*, vol. 37, letter no. 141, pub. in Sinha, p. 87.

¹⁹⁷ Wilks, Vol. II, pp. 8-9.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid, p. 10.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

letters) had set up an encampment outside the fort on that day. The Marathas made a surprise attack on this camp and defeated the Mysore troops, capturing around six cannons. Ali Raza Khan dumped his remaining two cannons in the moat and hastily withdrew into the fort. The Marathas recovered the guns from the moat²⁰¹. Madhava Rao realised that the captured cannon were superior to anything that his army possessed. The siege of the fort then began in earnest. The Marathas set up camp outside the bastions and then started digging trenches. The relentless firing of the cannons along with the cutting off of the logistics to the fort unnerved Ali Raza Khan as did the vast size of the Maratha army. He entered into negotiations with the Marathas in order to extract the maximum advantage to himself. He offered to surrender the fort and enter Maratha service if he was given Gurramkonda as his *jagir* and a pension of five lakh rupees²⁰². The city had belonged to his ancestors and so the Marathas agreed to it. By the second week of March, Sira was in Maratha hands and Ali Raza Khan enrolled in the Maratha army. This was no doubt a serious setback to Haidar as he had not only lost a major stronghold but also had been inflicted a psychological blow by the defection of his brother-in-law. By the middle of March Hoskote had fallen. These incidents and the ease with which the forts fell to the invaders indicate serious disaffection among the commanders appointed by Haidar to be in charge of the installations. In keeping with the policy of “back the winner”, they were ready to align with whichever power held the upper hand at the moment²⁰³. Thus if any important fort fell to invaders, the others in the vicinity would automatically surrender or defect to his side.

In the meantime, Haidar was crestfallen at the debacle of Sira and the defection of his brother-in-law. With the fall of Sira, the heartland of the kingdom of Mysore comprising of the important forts of Kolar, Dodaballapur and Bangalore were within striking distance for the Maratha cavalry. Therefore, the Mysore ruler decided to prepare himself for a war and at the same time try to negotiate. As a cautionary measure, he prepared Srirangapatna for a long siege in case the Marathas reached his doorstep. The fortifications of the city were beefed up and a series of strongholds, complete with cannons were set up between the fort’s ramparts and the Kaveri river. These redoubts usually consisted of wooden palisades backed by men and cannons. In front of each of the redoubts was a ditch to impede the movement of cavalry. Overall command of the troops was given to Faizullah Khan. The river at this time was shallow; so thousands of caltrops (metal balls with spikes) were kept ready to throw in the

²⁰¹ Briggs, op. cit., p. 127; Sinha, p. 86.

²⁰² Briggs, p. 127; Sinha, p. 87.

²⁰³ Jos Gommans, op. cit., p. 368.

path of the horses. The encampment outside the fort was defended by three hundred cannons and another one hundred guns were ready on the battlements of the fort²⁰⁴. He then sent his trusted commander Makdhum Ali Khan with select troops to garrison Bangalore. According to De la Tour, even during this critical time, Haidar did not lose courage. He continued his daily horse riding in full view of the city and the army; and his countenance remained calm though he did not indulge in any form of amusement²⁰⁵. There was treachery within also. The former *Dalavayi* Nanjaraja was supposed to be secretly negotiating with the Marathas and the Nizam for his reinstatement. Haidar persuaded him to come to the capital city falsely offering him security and then proceeded to keep him under house arrest with a pension for subsistence²⁰⁶. His two sons had been in Haidar's service; and the latter tried to show favour to them, but on their spurning his advances, he had them imprisoned²⁰⁷.

On the face of it, it seemed that the Maratha advance was unstoppable. However, there were several issues of serious concern for the Peshwa and his forces. The most important of these was the subject of money. So far, except for the actual plunder, the tribute raised had not materialised yet. Though some money had been raised in a few places since the campaign began, the major part of the tribute, amounting to nearly nine lakhs of rupees, had been paid in terms of pledged territory or promissory notes²⁰⁸. Money could not be extracted from land that had been laid waste; and promissory notes needed time to realise. Thus the pay of the Maratha troops started falling into arrears. The seriousness of the situation can be gauged by the fact that Madhava Rao's letters to Pune are full of entreaties for sending money to the tune of twenty five lakhs²⁰⁹. If the Nizam and his entourage had joined with the Marathas at this juncture, the treasure they usually carried with them might have sufficed; but there was still no sign of them despite assurances. Madhava Rao regularly deprecated them in his letters and was suspicious that the Nizam was in league with Haidar. Also, due to the lack of food and water, diseases like cholera had broken out in the Maratha encampments which lowered the morale of the troops. Another cause for concern was that Raghunath Rao, the Peshwa's uncle, was plotting against him; and so Madhava Rao was apprehensive of staying away from the capital for long. All these factors combined made him more receptive to overtures from Haidar for a truce.

²⁰⁴ M.M.D.L.T., pp. 122-123; Robson, p. 40.

²⁰⁵ M.M.D.L.T. p. 124.

²⁰⁶ Hayavadana Rao, p. 2492; Sampath, op. cit., p. 174.

²⁰⁷ Sampath, p. 174.

²⁰⁸ Briggs, p. 128.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.



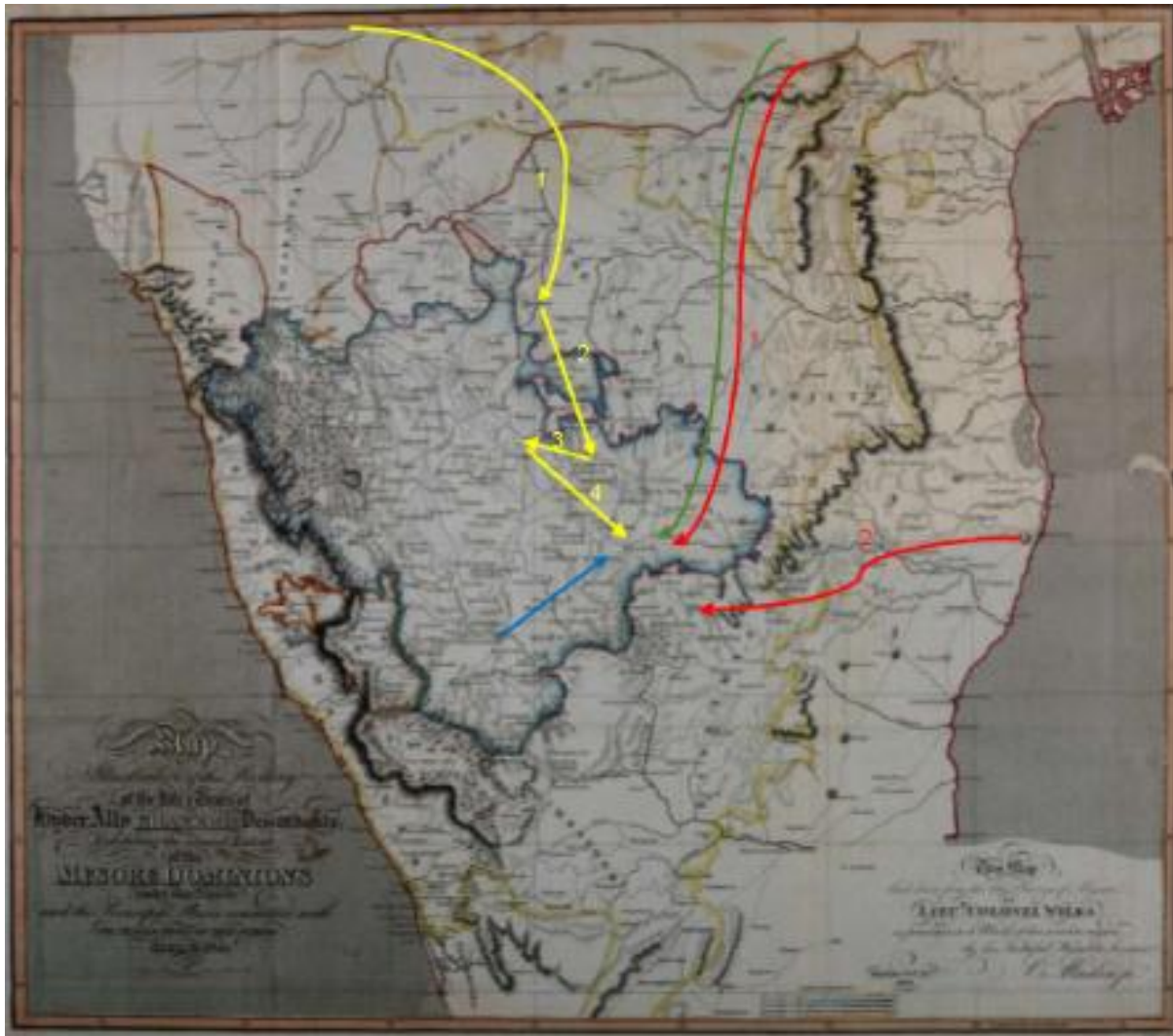
Top: The fort of Rayadurga which was the first important fort captured by the invading Maratha forces. Source: https://www.tripadvisor.in/Attraction_Review-g2295143-d3705442-Reviews-Rayadurg_Fort-Anantapur_Andhra_Pradesh.html# (accessed on February 22, 2016).

Bottom: The fort of Madhugiri from which Rani Virammaji was liberated by Peshwa Madhava Rao. Source: <http://kamaths.org/madhugiri-fort-madhugiri-hills-betta-trip/> (accessed on February 22, 2016).



Top: The fort of Sira which was the most important fort captured by the Marathas as it led to the defection of Haidar Ali's brother-in-law Mir Ali Raza Khan to the Marathas and Haidar Ali's opening of negotiations with them. Source: <http://karnataka.blogspot.com/16+Kasturi+Rangappa+Nayaka+fort+Sira.jpg> (accessed on February 22, 2016).

Bottom: Historical portrait of the fort of Bangalore, which was the furthest point reached by the hostile forces during the war. Portrait by James Hunter in the 1780s. Source: <http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/apac/other/019xzz000007683u00015000.html> (accessed on February 22, 2016).



 Maratha Army	 British Army	 Mysore Army	 Nizam's Army
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Above: The above map shows the events from January to July 1767.

The Maratha advance from Pune was as follows:- 1.) Rayadurga. 2.) Madhugiri. 3.) Sira. 4.) Devanahalli.

The Nizam's Army along with the detachment of the British army under Colonel Joseph Smith advanced and eventually made contact with the Maratha army near Bangalore.

Another British army advanced from Madras to seize the passes in the Carnatic and besiege Krishnagiri.

The Mysore army, at this point, advanced to Bangalore to meet the opposing forces.

After completing his preparations, Haidar sent out renewed feelers for a truce with the Peshwa. The latter refused to receive any envoy not having plenipotentiary powers who could stand guarantee for the terms agreed to²¹⁰. Finally, Haidar designated Appaji Ram, a trusted counsellor of his, as his *vakil* (envoy) to the Marathas²¹¹. Wilks gives a complete description of the proceedings. At the end of March 1767, Madhava Rao received Appaji Ram in a full durbar with his complete retinue of commanders and attendants, numbering upward of four hundred people. After presenting his letters, the envoy was directed to explain his terms to Madhava Rao who feigned indifference to him. But Appaji Ram was an experienced diplomat and was not put off by this and came straight to the point without beating around the bush. After saying that war was a terrible affair bringing misery to everyone, he stated that the treaty of Bidanur in 1765 had settled the affairs between Mysore and the Marathas and thus there was no cause for aggression. Madhava Rao said that the treaty of Bidanur had been concluded between the Maharaja of Mysore and the Marathas whereas Haidar was a usurper who kept the Maharaja a prisoner in his palace. Appaji Ram acknowledged that Nanjaraja Wodeyar, the new Maharaja of Mysore since 1767, was a prisoner but then indirectly hinted that the Peshwa himself was a usurper who had seized the powers of the Maratha Chhatrapati. Madhava Rao had no reply to this. This was certainly in keeping with his character as he had strong sense of propriety²¹². So he finally agreed to hold talks towards ending hostilities.

Negotiations were conducted and a treaty was drawn up in late April. Its main points were:-

1. A tribute of thirty one lakhs of rupees was to be paid with sixteen lakhs on hand and two instalments of seven and a half lakhs each in July and October respectively.
2. Chikkaballapur, Devanahalli and Kolar were to be restored to Haidar.
3. Haidar was to retain Basavapatna, Boindytal, Jagdev, Hangalwari and Margasi which he had earlier seized from the Marathas and the Polygars.
4. Haidar would restore all the territories seized from Murari Rao Ghorpade.
5. The Mysore armies would not take any retaliatory actions against Murari Rao or the Polygars or against Mir Ali Raza Khan.
6. The Nizam would receive from Haidar eighteen lakhs as arrears of tribute for the previous three years in instalments of six lakhs annually with half to be paid on hand and the other half six months later.

²¹⁰ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 11.

²¹¹ Robson, p. 14; Sardesai, *Selections from the Peshwa Daftar*, p. 129.

²¹² Robson, pp. 12-13.

7. All the Nayakas who were imprisoned would be released immediately.
8. The Marathas would not engage in any hostilities with Haidar's forces.
9. Haidar would maintain all grants to Brahmans and temples and would not molest Hindus in any way.

Arrangements were made to appoint ambassadors to implement the treaty with mutual exchange of presents²¹³. Kolar would be retained by the Marathas as a security for the tribute and would be handed over once it was paid. Several Maratha commanders like Mahadaji Ballal and Hari Ballal were dissatisfied with the treaty. They said that all the gains made during the war would be lost and advocated further conquests²¹⁴. Madhava Rao pointed out that Bangalore, Chennapatna and even Srirangapatna would have to be besieged to defeat Haidar. This would involve a long and costly siege which would last beyond the monsoons. Once the rains started the Maratha cavalry would be immobile²¹⁵. Therefore it was much more prudent to get the best possible terms and then withdraw to Pune. Haidar paid the entire amount due by early May and the Maratha forces evacuated Kolar and then retreated to their capital²¹⁶. Thus all hostilities between the Marathas and Haidar ceased for the next three years. It should be noted that due to his deft diplomacy, Haidar had managed to get off relatively lightly against a heavy onslaught.

The Invasion of the Nizam

However, on the other front the Nizam with his British allies was finally on the move by April. The affairs of the Nizam can be treated separately from that of the Marathas as there was virtually no joint campaign between the purported allies. Also, a change in the administration in Madras had upset the timetable of the allies. The new governor of Madras, Charles Bouchier, continued the policies of his predecessor Robert Palk and decided to prosecute the war against Haidar. As per the terms of the treaty drawn between the Madras government and the Nizam the previous November, Colonel Joseph Smith was despatched to join the Hyderabad ruler's forces on December 18 with a contingent of 600 infantry and 100 artillery, both comprising of Europeans, along with 30 cavalymen and 5000 Indian sepoy armed with 14 pieces of artillery²¹⁷. Smith had arrived from England only in September and

²¹³ Briggs, op. cit., pp. 129-131.

²¹⁴ Sardesai, *Selections from the Peshwa Daftar*, p. 126.

²¹⁵ Briggs, p. 129.

²¹⁶ Wilks, vol II, p. 13.

²¹⁷ Instructions to Smith, *Madras Military and Secret Proceedings* (hereafter M.M.S.P.), range 251, vol. 59, published in Sheikh Ali, op. cit., p. 67.

was as yet unfamiliar with the conditions in India. When he reached Hyderabad with his troops on January 16, the Nizam had already set out to pursue his campaign with 17,000 regular troops and 10,000 cavalry²¹⁸. Along the way, the Nizam's brother Basalat Jung and the Nawabs of Kadapah and Kurnool joined him increasing the size of his troops to 50,000 infantry and 150,000 cavalry²¹⁹. But he was constantly receiving Haidar's emissaries such as Mahfuz Khan who arrived in January with a gift of 50,000 pagodas and other gifts such as elephants and fabrics to induce him to break the alliance with the Marathas²²⁰. The Madras government was aware of Nizam Ali's correspondence with Haidar and sent James Bouchier to make counter offers in order to maintain the alliance.

The Nizam's progress was extremely tardy from the beginning. He would regularly stop at every important place on the way in order to collect tribute from the Polygars. His forces reached the Tungabhadra on March 9, a month after Madhava Rao had crossed it²²¹. It would take till April for the British detachment to join them. After joining the Hyderabad forces on April 13, Colonel Smith stated in his report that the expedition was disjointed and urged to have a definite plan of action²²². Also he was perturbed at the communications between the Nizam and Haidar and felt that there was the possibility of a double cross. But the Madras government was keen on keeping its alliance with the Nizam intact. Its fixed aim was the overthrow of Haidar and substantial conquest of Mysore territory. When the treaty with the Nizam was being drawn the previous November, the political agent John Call had stated, "The object is the entire overthrow of Hyder Ali Cawn who usurped the Government of Maysore country."²²³ The East India Company hoped to achieve two things from this; first its hold on the Northern Circars would be intact, and secondly it could aggrandize itself in the Carnatic.

The first serious setback to the Nizam and the British occurred on April 24, when they received news of the treaty between Haidar and the Marathas. The alliance had lost its most powerful cavalry arm. The Nizam and Smith sent Colonel Charles Tod along with other envoys to Madhava Rao asking him to stay within the coalition and also for a share in the

²¹⁸ Letter from John Call to Robert Palk dated March 19, *Palk Manuscripts*, p. 23.

²¹⁹ Sheikh Ali, p. 67.

²²⁰ Ibid, p. 68.

²²¹ Wilks, vol II, p. 15.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Sheikh Ali, p. 69.

gains of the Marathas²²⁴. These ambassadors were received coldly by the Peshwa; and when they put forward a claim on the spoils the entire durbar burst out laughing. Madhava Rao not only ridiculed the claims of the Nizam and the British but also demanded the tribute of *chauth* from the Madras government. Colonel Tod and his companions returned humiliated to their camp and apprised Smith of the proceedings²²⁵. When the Marathas departed in May, the Nizam's forces had reached Devanahalli and were en route to Bangalore. The progress was slow even for the British as they lacked pack animals to use for transporting their luggage²²⁶. The advancing monsoon further hampered their progress and forced them to camp at Devanahalli. Daily there were skirmishes between the foraging parties of the opposing forces. Due to harassment by Haidar's light cavalry, supplies in the allied camp grew scarce²²⁷. Colonel Smith was aware of the parleys taking place between Haidar and the Nizam and was apprehensive of his ally deserting him²²⁸. He wrote to Madras asking for permission to withdraw to Arcot where he would be in friendly territory and could establish a defensive perimeter²²⁹. But the Council at Madras, which was largely influenced by Mohammad Ali, the Nawab of Arcot, ordered him to continue his advance to Bangalore; and in the meantime it decided on its own plan of expansion by seizing key forts and territory in the Carnatic Payanghat so that it could consolidate its position against Haidar²³⁰.

The Madras government felt that a show of force would induce Haidar to make peace on favourable terms. It decided to seize the important passes in the Carnatic Payanghat area so that "he will be sensible that he will not have it so much in his power to disturb us."²³¹ By the end of May the Madras Army had captured Vaniyambadi, Tirupattur and Ambur. The army laid siege to Gigadevi and Krishnagiri but did not succeed in capturing them²³². On May 12, Colonel Smith advanced towards Bangalore from his camp in Devanahalli with 300 infantrymen and some cannons²³³. But Haidar had already stationed himself in the fort and let loose a barrage of cannon towards the British forces. Smith noticed that the Mysore forces occupied a strong defensive position and decided to retreat knowing that his small force was

²²⁴ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 16.

²²⁵ Sheikh Ali, p. 73.

²²⁶ Robson, p. 42.

²²⁷ M.M.D.L.T., p. 129.

²²⁸ Smith's Letter to Madras on March 9, pub. in Fortescue, p. 115.

²²⁹ M.M.D.L.T., p. 131; Robson, p. 41; Wilks, Vol. II, p. 17.

²³⁰ M.M.D.L.T., pp. 131-132; Wilks, p. 21-22.

²³¹ Board's minute on April 25, pub. in Sheikh Ali, p. 73; Fortescue, pp. 115-116.

²³² Fortescue, p. 116; Wilks, Vol. II, p. 22.

²³³ Sheikh Ali, p. 74.

insufficient to lay siege to the fortress²³⁴. This was the first confrontation between Haidar and the British during the Anglo-Mysore War. The British policy of territorial acquisition would backfire badly and would further goad Haidar into trying to use force to recover his territories. He redoubled his efforts in trying to break the alliance between the Nizam and the British.

De la Tour and Kirmani described the negotiations between Haidar and the Nizam in great detail. Both said that the discussions took place in Chennapatna between Bangalore and Mysore. But it is much more likely that it took place in the vicinity of Bangalore as the Nizam's forces had not been able to advance from there due to Haidar's defensive preparations. Haidar had withdrawn his army from the Malabar and other frontier areas and had assembled his troops in Bangalore. This was sufficient to awe the Nizam and make him more receptive to overtures. Haidar informed him through Mahfuz Khan that he would discuss terms only with a person of high rank and only after the British contingent with its commander had been sent away. The *Diwan* of the Nizam, Rukn-ud-daulah, agreed to be the envoy. He first asked Colonel Smith to retreat with the majority of his troops to Arcot giving the excuse that supplies had been exhausted and that the troops could be used in securing the passes that had been captured by the Madras Army. Smith was aware of the duplicity being practised by the Nizam but he decided to withdraw to Kadapatnam near Arcot so as to be out of reach in case of any treachery. He left a small contingent of 200 Europeans and 1000 sepoy in the Nizam's camp at the *Diwan*'s request. On May 16, he wrote to the Council that the Nizam and Haidar were likely to make a peace treaty and therefore hostilities between Mysore and Madras could erupt²³⁵.

By this time, negotiations between the two potentates were in full swing. In order to demonstrate his good faith, Haidar withdrew his troops from the vicinity of the camp and also allowed his sutlers to supply food and other necessities to the Nizam's camp. Rukn-ud-daulah arrived at Haidar's camp and held discussions with the Nawab. A treaty was drawn up where it was agreed that Haidar's son Tipu Sultan would marry the daughter of Mahfuz Khan, the elder brother of Mohammad Ali, the Nawab of Arcot. He would then be invested with the title of Nawab of Arcot. Finally a joint expedition would be conducted by both the Nizam and Haidar towards overthrowing Mohammad Ali and installing Tipu as the new Nawab. Similarly, Raza Ali Khan, the son of Chanda Sahib, also renounced his right to Madurai and

²³⁴ M.M.D.L.T., p. 129.

²³⁵ Ibid, p. 131.

Tiruchirapalli which would be handed over to Tipu. According to the terms agreed, Haidar would pay the Nizam monthly six lakhs of rupees as expenses and would retain the sole right to garrison fortresses in the Carnatic. Tipu Sultan was sent with a grand retinue of 6000 infantry including 3000 Topasses, 4000 select cavalry, 300 European infantry and a select cavalry regiment to wait on the Nizam and obtain his ratification of the treaty²³⁶. The Nizam was willing to agree to this arrangement and he dismissed the remaining British troops in his entourage. On June 1, James Bouchier left for Madras.

The rapprochement between Haidar and the Nizam was one of the remarkable feats of diplomacy in the war. But it is indicative of the fluid state of politics prevailing in the subcontinent during that time. The reasons for this new alliance were manifold. Haidar was keen to regain the strategic passes which had been occupied by the Madras Army as they constituted the link between Mysore and outlying territories such as Dindigul and Virupakshi. He sent his *vakil* Meenaji Pandit to Madras to ask for their restitution and even made Madhava Rao and the Nizam write to the Council²³⁷. However, the Madras government remained adamant and stated that the recent territorial acquisitions were necessary for the security of the British establishment. Haidar felt that war was the only way to regain his territory and at the same time gain an advantage over his old adversary, the Nawab of Arcot. The Nizam also was on the lookout for his own gains. Though his army was in a pitiable state, the prestige associated with him as the Subedar of the Deccan more than made up for it. He gained an idea about the strength of Haidar's army during the campaign near Bangalore and felt that it could match the British. Hence he was not keen to pursue the war against Haidar. Now, the wavering Nizam came under the influence of his advisers such as Basalat Jang and Rukn-ud-daulah who convinced him that if he allied with Haidar Ali and attacked the territories of Arcot he could regain the Northern Circars and also would gain a handsome sum of money from the conquests²³⁸. At the same time, he kept his channels of communication open with the Madras government as well to see which side the bread was buttered the most.

Haidar now sent a message to the Madras government through Meenaji Pandit that he was going to attack the territories of the Nawab of Arcot in concert with the Nizam Ali Khan and the British should withdraw their garrisons from the forts in the Carnatic Payanghat. He said

²³⁶ M.M.D.L.T., pp. 132-134.

²³⁷ Sheikh Ali, p. 74.

²³⁸ Ibid, p. 78.

that his quarrel was with Mohammad Ali Khan only and he had no hostile designs on Madras. He further stated that he was aware that several forts had been pledged to them by Mohammad Ali against sums borrowed from them and he offered to reimburse them for it²³⁹. At the same time, he sent applications for aid from the French governor at Pondicherry. These letters were carried by a Persian confidante hidden in the barrel of his pistol. After giving him the letters, the envoy asked the French governor to join Haidar in the alliance. The governor demurred, saying that he would have to ask for instructions from Paris. But at the same time, he said that he would turn a blind eye to any French military personnel enlisting in Haidar's army and also he would keep up a regular supply of arms and equipment, though secretly so as not to antagonise the British²⁴⁰.

Haidar Ali made full preparations for the campaign about to take place. He made a peace treaty with the Malabar princes and withdrew his troops in exchange for regular payments of tribute. This freed a large number of men to take part in the upcoming conflict. His European trained army including the grenadiers and the hussars would now be called into battle. He also increased the number of cannons in his artillery and made arrangements for the necessary ammunition. Along with the regular carts to carry gunpowder and cannonballs, the porters and the merchants in the baggage train of the army would each have to place a cannonball in their pack animals and would have to carry a certain amount of gunpowder themselves. These balls could vary in weight from six to eighteen kilograms. The bullocks harnessed to the cannon were doubled to as to ensure speed in the march; and an elephant was yoked to the 18-pounder guns and above. Every grenadier battalion had two 4-pounder guns attached to it²⁴¹. Having completed the preparations, the two joint armies set out along the Coromandel coast in early July. The flat, level country facilitated the rapid movement of a large army.

The East India Company's invasion of the Mysore territory along with the seizure of the strategic passes and other acts of aggression invited a backlash and the clashes between the Mysore troops and the East India Company had already taken place near Devanahalli and Bangalore. The Council at Madras was eager to defeat Haidar Ali and indulge in territorial aggrandizement and they had ordered their officers to keep up hostilities with the Mysore army. The events that followed were the natural results of this policy. However, it is doubtful

²³⁹ M.M.D.L.T., pp. 135-136.

²⁴⁰ Ibid, pp. 140-146.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

whether Haidar actually intended any large scale conquests in the Madras territories. With the resources and troops at hand, his aims seem to have been restricted to retaking the strategic mountain passes and limited territorial aggrandizement.

The Invasion of the Carnatic

Meanwhile, the Council of Madras did not feel that there was the danger of an invasion and chose to ignore the ultimatum. There were many reasons for this attitude. The East India Company army had won the Second and Third Carnatic Wars and felt secure in the strength of its arms. The governor Charles Bouchier had a very poor opinion of Haidar's army and indeed wrote in a letter to Colonel Smith, "Indeed I could almost wish that he would be so fool-hardy as to think himself able to overcome us."²⁴² Also, the Nizam had been playing a double game. While negotiating with Haidar, the Nizam's emissaries assured the Council that the Hyderabad ruler had no hostile intentions towards Madras. The governor and his deputies chose to believe these specious assurances. They believed that the Nizam would remain their ally; or at worst he would withdraw from the conflict and remain neutral. Thus, they were surprised when reports came in mid-July of the joint armies advancing towards the frontiers of Arcot. It was only on July 15 that they finally decided to mobilise the garrison stationed in Madras. In the estimation of Colonel Smith, at the time of the invasion Haidar possessed 13,000 cavalry and 18,000 infantry with around 50 cannons of various calibres while the Nizam's forces comprised of 30,000 cavalry and 10,000 infantry with 60 guns. Smith had at his disposal 300 European infantry and 5000 sepoys along with 1000 cavalry provided by Nawab Mohammad Ali²⁴³.

From the start, there was a dysfunctional leadership which hampered the British war effort. The Council at Madras insisted on micromanaging every aspect of the campaign and was loath to delegate authority to the field commanders who had more experience of actual combat. Already they had allowed themselves to be double-crossed by the Nizam but were lax in taking remedial measures. Also, as the Council was composed primarily of merchants, it saw war profiteering as a natural sideline to any conflict that developed. De la Tour outlined several instances when the Madras government's short-sightedness left Smith and other officers with serious deficiencies to prosecute the war. The Council had been reluctant to set up a European trained cavalry due to the expenses involved and was content to use the

²⁴² Bouchier to Smith, July 5, 1767, pub. in Sheikh Ali, p. 75.

²⁴³ Robson, p. 42; Wilks, Vol II, p. 25.

Nawab of Arcot's cavalry for the purposes of the war even though it was highly inferior to that of the Mysore army. Also, the local merchants were unwilling to sell pack oxen and other beasts of burden to the British forces because the Company was notorious for forcing them to sell their animals for a small fraction of their actual value. Due to this, the Madras Army could not move swiftly with its baggage and cannon and was an easy target for raiding parties which consisted of light cavalry. In another instance, instead of supplying the local alcohol for the troops, the Company insisted on procuring rum from Java as an alternative because the merchants in that island paid huge commissions to the Council members²⁴⁴. This lack of organization and planning among the civilian staff would contribute in no small measure to the course of the war.

After his withdrawal from Mysore territory, Smith had been directed to supervise the siege at Krishnagiri which had defied all attempts at capture²⁴⁵. He was engaged in this operation when Haidar and his allies burst into the Carnatic Payanghat in August 1767. By the middle of August, the Mysore ruler was around 20 km from the foothills of the Javadi hills and facing the Vellore mountain pass²⁴⁶. If he crossed the pass he would be within striking distance of the town of Kaveripatnam on the banks of the Palar river. On his right was the pass of Venkatadampatti (written as Ventigiri in De la Tour's account) which led to the town of Vaniyambadi and still further was the pass of Krishnagiri. De la Tour explains the following events in great detail. On receiving news of Haidar's arrival, Smith raised the siege being conducted at Krishnagiri and positioned a detachment of his troops at the Vellore mountain pass which could be easily defended as it was a high ground. As it was the only pass which was wide enough for a large artillery and baggage train to pass through, Smith felt certain that Haidar would attempt to force a passage through it. Haidar held a council of war to decide the next course of action. Rukn-ud-daulah suggested venturing through the pass of Venkatadampatti as Krishnagiri was unsuitable for a large train of artillery. Haidar agreed and personally led his army out at 2 o' clock in the night²⁴⁷.

The Bedars and other irregular troops formed the vanguard of the column followed by the regular infantry with the grenadiers at their head and then came the cavalry with Haidar marching on the right flank. Marching behind this column was the artillery manned by

²⁴⁴ M.M.D.L.T., pp. 166-167.

²⁴⁵ Fortescue, p. 116; Wilks, p. 23.

²⁴⁶ M.M.D.L.T., p. 168.

²⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 169.

Europeans and around 2000 Topasses and grenadiers. Two companies of European cavalry formed the rear²⁴⁸. In the meantime, the British troops were alerted to this movement and rushed to gain the heights above the pass of Venkatadampatti in order to pre-empt the march leaving a small troop of the Arcot army at the Vellore pass. Once in position, they confidently awaited the arrival of the allied armies of Mysore and Hyderabad. But even as they watched, the artillery detachment with the European troops made a sharp detour and headed for the Vellore pass as fast as possible²⁴⁹. As these troops had been trained in infantry manoeuvring, and the pass being wide and level, they secured it with minimal losses against the light opposition. It seems that only the commander of this detachment had been briefed by Haidar to execute this manoeuvre. At the same time, a troop of Haidar's light cavalry under Bahoud Khan came through the Krishnagiri pass and the troops garrisoned in the fort of Krishnagiri came out to join him²⁵⁰.

The British troops now risked being outflanked and surrounded. They did not have time to regain the Vellore pass before the Mysore troops captured it. So they wisely decided to retreat to the town of Kaveripattinam and join the main British army camped over there. The European troops now joined Bahoud Khan and fired nine cannons which was the prearranged signal that they had secured the Vellore pass. Haidar now moved his entire army through the pass and joined them²⁵¹. Moving the whole combined army across the pass took the greater part of the day; and the baggage trains and the camp followers started arriving at nightfall. The Europeans in the artillery and the infantry, who had been on the march the previous night and the whole of the day, were fatigued and could not wait for the supply train to come up; and so they subsisted on hunting the game available in the countryside. It was in vain that Haidar asked them to wait for the sutlers and the provisions to come up for the customary night's feast²⁵².

The Mysore army's taking of the passes at Vellore and Krishnagiri was a classic use of the tactic of the feint to trick the opponent to come to one spot and then move to a different position; and it is a tribute to Haidar's skills as a military commander. However, this event is largely ignored in the British sources about the war. An exception is Wilks who said that Smith erected a defensive position on one of the passes (without saying which one) and then,

²⁴⁸ M.M.D.L.T., p. 169.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ Ibid, p. 170.

²⁵¹ Ibid, p. 171.

²⁵² Ibid, pp. 171-172.

being unaware of the topography of the region, let Haidar slip through “while he believed them to be hesitating on the possibility of forcing the pass, on which they had merely made a demonstration to draw his attention from their actual movement.”²⁵³ The British historians and others downplayed this event as one of little consequence. However, the real motive seems to have been to downplay the abilities of the Mysore troops. To the colonial historians, it was inconceivable that a ‘native’ should be able to outmatch them in warfare. Throughout their writing, there is a tendency to downplay Haidar’s victories and instead attribute them to the shortcomings of the British army.

Meanwhile, the British troops had rejoined Colonel Smith in Kaveripattinam and informed him that the Mysore army had got through the passes into the Carnatic Payanghat and was advancing in their direction. Smith sent an urgent message to Madras for reinforcements. The Council now realised its folly and sent a strong detachment under Lieutenant-Colonel Wood to reinforce Smith’s forces. But as Wood was stationed in Tiruchirapalli, it would take around ten days for him to cover the distance to join Smith²⁵⁴. The Council also sought the services of Murari Rao Ghorpade, knowing his enmity with Haidar, and offered him the chance of territorial aggrandizement and the chance for plunder²⁵⁵. Knowing that his position in Kaveripattinam was untenable, Smith decided to retire to Tirupattur leaving a detachment of 1200 infantrymen along with Topasses and 30 cannon with European gunners for the defence of Kaveripattinam²⁵⁶. He also detached 100 cavalrymen belonging to the Nawab of Arcot to scout the countryside and gather intelligence²⁵⁷. After arriving at Tirupattur, Smith waited for the junction with expected forces of Lt. Col. Wood. At the same time, he kept a watchful eye for news on the movement of his adversaries.

Initial Skirmishes

Now that the strategic passes were in his possession, Haidar lost no time in pressing the attack. He sent Makhdoom Ali Khan with 4000 cavalry to besiege Kaveripattinam. The latter moved swiftly and besieged the town and also cut off communications with Tirupattur by driving the horsemen left behind to seek refuge in the township²⁵⁸. All *harkaras* (messengers) were intercepted and this further strengthened the suspicion of Smith that Haidar’s spies were

²⁵³ Fortescue, p. 116; Wilks, Vol II, p. 24.

²⁵⁴ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 26.

²⁵⁵ Board’s minute on August 17, *M.M.S.P.*, published in Sheikh Ali, op. cit., p. 84.

²⁵⁶ *M.M.D.L.T.*, p. 172.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid*; Robson, p. 43.

²⁵⁸ *M.M.D.L.T.*, p. 172.

active in the region and the Nizam's commanders were in league with him. On learning that the main British force was camping at Tirupattur, Makhdoom delegated the siege of Kaveripattinam to a subordinate commander and set off to conduct a raid on the former. He conducted a night march and on arriving he lay hidden among the hillocks surrounding the town. Having received no news from his scouts, Smith supposed that Haidar was still involved in the siege of Kaveripattinam and would not disturb him for time being. He therefore sent out foraging parties with cattle to graze in the surrounding countryside. This was observed by Makhdoom's army which lost no time in seizing the cattle. Smith hastily sent out a detachment of the Nawab's cavalry numbering about 1000 horse to attack the intruders and drive them away²⁵⁹. But Makhdoom was more than a match for them and succeeded in killing more than a third of them.

The Nawab's cavalry retreated in a disorderly fashion towards the town of Tirupattur rather than towards the fort where the British had set up camp with Makhdoom's troops in hot pursuit. When the gates of the town opened to let the retreating cavalry in, a section of the Mysore troops also swept into this unexpected opening and, defying the firing from the fort, captured Tirupattur²⁶⁰. Col. Smith had drawn his forces into battle array on the arrival of the opposing forces and was conducting retaliatory action when he saw that the town had fallen. Now the full force of Makhdoom's cavalry was brought to bear on the British troops. Smith knew that his force was too small to hold out against the opponents and was apprehensive of the arrival of Haidar's main army. Therefore he decided to fight his way out and retreat till the arrival of reinforcements under Wood. Collecting as many cattle and supplies as he could, he left the fort of Tirupattur and marched in three columns, with the slow moving artillery and baggage train forming the middle column to be protected, towards Changama which lay on the route to Thiruvannamalai. Despite the regular harassment of Makhdoom's cavalry, Smith reached his destination safely with 200 cavalymen among whom there were only six Europeans²⁶¹. Knowing that Haidar would not attack Changama without first reducing Kaveripattinam and Vaniyambadi on the route to the former as they could threaten his supply trains, Smith decided to camp at the place and wait for Wood. The town was in a very defensible position, having a citadel for defence as well as there being a tank and a river nearby where troops could be stationed. Also the roads from Changama to Thiruvannamalai

²⁵⁹ M.M.D.L.T., p. 172.

²⁶⁰ Ibid, p. 173.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

were wide and could accommodate large columns of infantry thus allowing a rapid junction of troops²⁶².

This was the first victory of Mysore's forces against the British in the war. But a very vague account of the events was given by Wilks. He said that the hostilities opened on August 25 with the seizure of the cattle by Makhdoom. But he did not mention the place where it occurred. Nor did he mention that the town was captured by the Mysore troops the same day. He only said that Smith moved with his troops on August 28. Also he castigated Haidar for not preventing the junction of the forces of Smith and Wood by seizing the pass at Changama²⁶³. This is in keeping with the British prejudice of magnifying their own victories while belittling those of their opponents and at the same time celebrating the latter's defeats. But it is also mentioned in the memoirs of Ramachandra Rao Punganuri, who was in Mysore service, that the British army which was encamped a few *kos* from the town was defeated and was forced to retreat along the route to Thiruvannamalai²⁶⁴. This lends credence to the account of De La Tour. Therefore, it is indisputable that Haidar's army had defeated the British troops at Kaveripattinam and the surrounding areas at this stage of his invasion of the Carnatic and the latter were forced to beat a retreat and wait for reinforcements.

The Siege of Kaveripattinam

De la Tour gives the only detailed account of the siege of Kaveripattinam. Other sources like Punganuri mention it in brief but do not go into details. The town was surrounded by a wall with ramparts with the watchtowers made of stone. The river Palar nearby was nearly dry and so the moat surrounding the town was now a dry ditch. Haidar now invested the town with his main army on August 25 which had been led through the passes at Vellore and Krishnagiri; and he himself set up a camp on a hillock a few kilometres away to observe and supervise the proceedings²⁶⁵. He saw that the houses on the route to the citadel of the town of Kaveripattinam were on fire. It was clear that the troops in the town intended to abandon the town and retreat to this stronghold in the fortress and continue the battle from that entrenched position. Captain McKain, the British commanding officer of the detachment was confident of holding his position and, in order to view the progress of the battle and observe the Mysore

²⁶² M.M.D.L.T., p. 173.

²⁶³ Wilks, Vol II, pp. 24-25.

²⁶⁴ Punganuri, p. 16.

²⁶⁵ Wilson, p. 238.

troops, was seated with his officers in a tent on the ramparts of the citadel²⁶⁶. Haidar now instructed the commander of his artillery to get ready to attack and support his irregulars who would scale the fort.

The French officer in charge of the artillery in Haidar Ali's army moved eight cannons to the edge of the defensive ditch surrounding the town under the fire of three cannons firing from the ramparts of the fort. His main task was to provide a diversion and a covering fire for the soldiers about to escalate the walls of the town. Therefore, the park of artillery approached the gate of the wall farthest from the fort and set up the cannon opposite the gate. The escorting and supporting troops hid themselves behind the walls and the bushes and also in the ditch. At two o' clock in the afternoon, the cannonade began. De la Tour said that in the initial bombardment the tent of the British commander McKain was flattened²⁶⁷. Then the firing was directed towards the gate and the watchtowers near it. At the same time, around 10,000 irregulars of the allied armies swarmed the countryside and headed towards the town, hiding themselves in the gardens and houses that had been deserted. The British officers rightly supposed that this crowd had come in search of plunder. They expected the attack to be made in the standard European fashion i.e. by breaching the walls with the artillery and then the storming of the breach by the 'forlorn hope' (The storming party of a breach was called the *forlorn hope*).

Then, at three o' clock, when the leaders of the irregulars had signalled that they were ready, the eight cannons fired twice which was the signal to commence the attack. When the second salvo had died down, the irregulars emerged from all parts of the surroundings and stormed the town. Some of them crossed the river while others tried to cross the ditch with bamboo ladders; others had poles with hooks attached to them; and still others had hooks attached to their turbans which they unfurled and threw over the walls in order to climb up while another party was hacking at the gate with swords, axes and daggers in order to get into the town²⁶⁸. The British retreated to the citadel but fifty sepoys and a European sergeant were captured by the mob which stripped them of their valuables. But the loot was small as most of the population had evacuated the place before the siege. The British managed to eventually drive out the raiding parties from the town, mainly using the three cannons in the fort. By nightfall,

²⁶⁶ M.M.D.L.T., p. 174.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ Ibid, pp. 175-176.

the town had been cleared of the pillagers though with some losses. The British retreated to the fort to await new developments.

In the night a battery of 20 cannons, each of calibre 24 pounds, was set up against the wall of the town nearest to the citadel. There was no need to dig a trench to construct a mound as a platform for the battery as conveniently there was the earthen wall of a neighbouring house which was still standing even though it had been set on fire; only its roof was burnt. Interestingly, the gabions (wooden structures used to aim the cannon and protect the gunners) were the same that had been captured from the Smith's army during his parting with the Nizam²⁶⁹. At six o' clock the next morning, all the cannons started firing simultaneously. Captain McKain had raised two earthen platforms in the fort on which he placed four small cannons to fire on the opposition. Along with these and the rest of his infantry he made a fighting stand on the citadel. As the attack of the irregulars and the other soldiers began, the British returned fire from their prepared positions. Many soldiers of the Mysore army fell to the combined artillery and musket fire of the British troops. Haidar then decided to change tactics. He positioned 200 of his *Ahasham* footsoldiers at select locations among the ruined buildings of the town and told them to shoot at the British soldiers. They were armed with matchlocks and had a reputation for accuracy; and so many British soldiers fell against their sniper fire. According to De La Tour around 10-12 artillerymen and a number of sepoys were killed in the initial firing by the *Ahasham* soldiers²⁷⁰. After a while, the forward positions were denuded of troops as they came under increasingly effective fire by Haidar's troops. Around 9 o' clock in the morning of August 27, the British garrison hoisted the white flag and surrendered²⁷¹. No breach had been made by the cannon as yet; therefore, it is very likely that the casualties inflicted by the musketry were instrumental in the British capitulation.

Haidar was surprised at the swift capitulation of the fort of Kaveripattinam as in his previous encounters with the Europeans they had fought tenaciously against the forces of Mysore. He even ventured out of his tent towards the fort to personally make sure that this was factual. He then sent an officer to negotiate terms with the British garrison and stated that their demands must not be denied. Captain McKain asked that he and his troops should be able to march out with their colours and battle honours. According to the terms negotiated, the European troops would retire to Madras while the sepoys had the choice of either going back

²⁶⁹ M.M.D.L.T., p. 176.

²⁷⁰ Ibid, pp. 176-177.

²⁷¹ Wilson, p. 238.

home or entering Haidar's service. Many of the sepoy and the Indian cavalymen chose to go into the service of Mysore. The officers and the sepoy were allowed to take their personal belongings with them but all the weapons, ammunition, supplies, horses and everything else which belonged to the British government, the Madras government or to Nawab Mohammad Ali were confiscated²⁷². This was the normal practice of dealing with the surrendered garrison and was used by the Marathas, the Mughals and several other powers in their sieges. The rationale behind this move seems to have been to encourage the early surrender of forts rather than the resort to protracted sieges. Also, this treatment encouraged defection from the other side.

Seeing that Haidar agreed to most of his demands, McKain asked for payment for the supplies seized in the fort, saying that it was his personal property. This is unlikely as it was most certainly seized from the surrounding countryside but Haidar paid up knowing that it would encourage others to make parleys with him. Captain McKain returned to Madras where he was commended by the Council for his brave defence of Kaveripattinam and was made commander of the Madras garrison²⁷³. Thus by August 28, Kaveripattinam was under Haidar's control. This victory was also barely mentioned by Wilks and other British sources who state that the town and fortress fell after a two-day siege. The most detailed description in these sources is by Wilks who said that three companies of British troops under Captain McKain bravely repelled two charges by Haidar's forces. There was hardly any description of the ending of the siege or the negotiations that followed or even the aftermath. In contrast, great praise was heaped on Colonel Smith who is credited with leading an orderly retreat and Haidar was belittled for not being able to harass him²⁷⁴.

Having secured Kaveripattinam, Haidar set out with his army the next night at two o' clock. At noon, the army set up camp on the banks of the Palar river in order to relax and take refreshments; the camp being guarded by the irregular troops. The army then crossed the river and resumed its march in several columns with the cavalry in the lead, the artillery and the grenadier troops coming next, and the infantry in the rear. The Mysore army marched in this fashion till ten o' clock in the night when they relaxed for a couple of hours while the horses and cattle fed on the scrub that grew in the countryside. When the moon rose at midnight the European cavalry and the hussars proceeded onwards and by dawn they were

²⁷² M.M.D.L.T., pp. 178.

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ Wilks, Vol. II, pp. 25-26.

joined by the cavalry under Makhdoom Ali in the forest near Tirupattur²⁷⁵. The grenadiers and the artillery came up next. The rest of the army joined them by mid-morning. Makhdoom was doubtless glad to see the main Mysore army as he had been indulging in open warfare with his cavalry contingent without adequate food or shelter. He now had the opportunity of properly feeding his men and horses and giving them some much-needed rest.

The Battle of Changama

In the meantime, Colonel Smith was retreating in an orderly manner towards Changama through the pass at Singarepettah after commencing his march on August 28. His plan was to set up camp there and wait for reinforcements. In all probability, he was not yet aware of the capitulation of Kaveripattinam as the messengers were unable to get through. But already small-scale cavalry attacks had taken place on his columns which alerted him to the fact that his adversaries were nearby. This was without doubt the light cavalry under Makhdoom which was active in the area. The irregular troops attached to it could clear a path by removing boulders or cutting down trees in a short while. The Mysore cavalry continued its raids on the British troops even after they reached Changama on September 1 after two weary days of marching. Even after Smith and his men set up their tents at nightfall, the Mysore troops rained down rockets on the encampment causing a lot of disturbance, especially among the animals of the camp²⁷⁶. He then decided to move further to the south and east in order to be nearer to the reinforcements from Madras.

Now Haidar began his pursuit of the retreating British forces. There exists some disagreement as to the origin of his plans. Wilks said Haidar's plan was to inveigle Smith into attacking his strong position at Kaveripattinam and that he wrote several taunting letters to the British commander to that effect. But the Nizam criticised Haidar for his so-called 'timid' policy of allowing the British to escape and not cutting them off and said that the Hyderabad forces would make attacks on the British baggage train and accordingly despatched some of his cavalry. Haidar felt that he would have to take action in order to satisfy his ally and so he started to press his attack on the rear of the British column²⁷⁷. But De La Tour had a different version. He said that it was Haidar's plan all along to pursue the column and defeat it and seize what he could²⁷⁸. The latter version seems more probable as it is inconceivable that

²⁷⁵ M.M.D.L.T., p. 178-179.

²⁷⁶ Wilks, vol II, p. 27.

²⁷⁷ Ibid, p. 26.

²⁷⁸ M.M.D.L.T., p. 180.

Haidar expected that a retreating British force would turn around and attack a strongly fortified location. Therefore his pursuit seems to have been on his own volition. But the Nizam's troops did venture out and occupy some areas near the pass at Changama; this seems to have been done because the Hyderabad ruler was keen to acquire some glory also.

Now Haidar's regular troops began to follow the retreating British columns while the light cavalry kept up its harassment tactics. The horsemen relied mainly on attacking the vast baggage train which would necessarily have to be lightly guarded due to its length which could stretch the number of troops to the limit. They could not engage in a direct confrontation with the British troops as the sepoys' volley fire could prove devastating. Smith knew that his force was too small to fight against Haidar's army and he retreated further southeast in order to put himself out of danger. By September 2, he had come out into the open country with a range of hills on his east and was going in the direction of the Cheyyar river, a small tributary of the Palar, which was fordable at that time of the year²⁷⁹. Haidar was following them with his *avval* battalions and was waiting for his main army to catch up. According to De La Tour, Haidar intended to position himself on the opposite bank of the Cheyyar river and oppose the crossing of Smith's troops²⁸⁰. If this manoeuvre had succeeded then Smith would have found himself in dire straits as he would then have to take a circuitous route through hilly terrain to reach Thiruvannamalai.

But Haidar's hand was forced prematurely. Rukn-ud-daulah arrived in his camp on the morning of September 3 at about 10 o'clock with the usual accompaniment of drums and cymbals. The loud music from these instruments alerted Smith as to Haidar's position. He immediately struck camp and made preparations to move out²⁸¹. But Wilks made no mention of this and said that the breaking of the camp at an unusual time was a deliberate move on Smith's part in order to confuse the opposition and steal a march on them²⁸². This does not seem true as Smith had no adequate means of ascertaining the movements of his foes as he lacked suitable cavalry for scouting purposes. As such, he would have been ignorant of Haidar's exact situation. But Punganuri writes that Rukn-ud-daulah was in Haidar's company at the time²⁸³. So in all likelihood, Smith had no idea about Haidar's whereabouts till the arrival of the *Diwan* of the Nizam. But now that he had been alerted he lost no time in

²⁷⁹ Wilks, Vol II, p. 27.

²⁸⁰ M.M.D.L.T., p. 179-180.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Wilks, Vol II, pp. 27-28.

²⁸³ Punganuri, p. 16.

forming his troops and marching forth to cross the river before Haidar could cut him off. The vanguard comprised of a battalion of sepoy followed by Mohammad Ali's cavalry and then came the baggage train. As this contained the vital food supplies, it was flanked on each side by a battalion of select infantry which moved in columns. Then came the rest of the army with the flank companies forming a separate detachment to act as a rearguard²⁸⁴. He marched quickly towards the river to ford it before Haidar could cut him off.

On seeing his quarry move, Haidar realised that he would have to act fast before it slipped out of his grasp. He called up all his available infantry and cavalry in order to pursue the British troops before they got across the river. But most of the soldiers of the Madras Army had already succeeded in getting across the Cheyyar. At that time, one of the hills lying to the east of the British troops and overlooking the pass was occupied by a cavalry contingent belonging to the Nizam's army. Smith ordered Captain Cosby to clear it so that there would be no obstacles to his movement. Cosby first cleared the settlement at the foot of the hill and then proceeded up the height where a bayonet charge sufficed to put the Nizam's troops to flight. The Captain saw that the hill was an excellent vantage point to observe and attack Haidar's troops which had started arriving. He sent a report to Smith suggesting that the hill would make an excellent defensive position and asked that the leading troops be positioned there. Smith agreed with the views of Cosby and, turning to the left, marched the vanguard of his infantry in a single column up the hill unmindful of the Mysore army's harassing tactics²⁸⁵.

On reaching the summit, Smith turned to his right and saw that Haidar's army was now arriving in force. He accordingly arranged his troops in defensive positions across the hill. The commander of the European cavalry had been sent forward with his section to reconnoitre the British positions and on hearing his report Haidar gave orders to his grenadier battalions supported by his cavalry to attack the British positions. Again, De La Tour who gave the most detailed account of the battle said that the Madras forces consisted of 3000 Europeans and 10,000 sepoy with 2000 cavalry. There is no doubt that this was an exaggeration. Such a huge force would have been difficult to be accommodated on the hill²⁸⁶. A force of 300 Europeans and 5000 sepoy as reported by Smith is much more likely. The infantrymen formed lines across the slope with the European troops in the centre and the

²⁸⁴ Wilks, p. 27-28.

²⁸⁵ Ibid, pp. 28-29.

²⁸⁶ M.M.D.L.T., p. 181.

artillery in the rear. De La Tour first said that the British had 24 cannons and later said they had 60 cannons while Wilks said that they had 14 cannons. The latter figure is more probable as Wilks had access to the records of the Madras government. Most of the cannons were placed in the centre and a couple on each of the flanks. This was the standard deployment used by the British army during the early modern period. The artillery would fire over the heads of the infantry towards the opposing forces and then would advance along with the troops. The cavalry were interspersed between the lines and they were mainly guarding the baggage.

The Mysore forces moved to attack the British who held the high ground. The grenadiers who were in the vanguard advanced over the vegetation to within a few yards of the British positions. But the British musketry and artillery fire were very accurate and effective and they were forced to retreat with heavy losses. Several more attempts to seize the hill made throughout the day proved ineffectual. In one of the charges, Haidar's commander Ghalib Mohammad Khan, the *Bakshi*, was killed²⁸⁷. In another action, the European sergeants captured two of the British cannons in one of their forays; but the British made a counter charge and managed to recover the guns²⁸⁸. Fighting ceased with nightfall as the two opposing sides were not visible to each other. Smith had managed to stand his ground against the onslaught of the forces of Haidar Ali. But during the melee, a troop of horsemen had managed to attack the baggage train of the Madras Army and to make off with the stores of rice kept there²⁸⁹. Colonel Smith was now in a precarious position. He was bereft of supplies with which to feed his troops. He had no choice but to retreat to Thiruvannamalai immediately and restock over there on victuals. After midnight, he set out with his retinue and reached his destination late on September 4²⁹⁰.

Thus ended the battle of Changama on the night of September 3. It had been a very costly affair for Haidar²⁹¹. All the sources on the war be it Wilks, De La Tour, Kirmani or Punganuri, said that he suffered very heavy casualties during this battle. Kirmani, who normally gave exaggerated accounts of Haidar's prowess, said that the Colonel (whom he called Hewit) took position on a slope and with "his guns and musketry broke the heads and necks of his assailants till evening; and however, great and vigorous were the efforts and

²⁸⁷ Wilks, p. 29.

²⁸⁸ M.M.D.L.T., p. 182.

²⁸⁹ Wilks, p. 30.

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

²⁹¹ Malleeson, *The Decisive Battles*, p. 216; Robson, p. 44.

exertions of Hydur's (sic) and the Nizam's troops to plunder and destroy this detachment, they were of no avail."²⁹² But he also said that the British troops suffered many casualties from the firing by the allied soldiers²⁹³. Punganuri said that there was a severe fight at Changmavan-dikk (sic) where "Hyder lost many men."²⁹⁴ Wilks said that Haidar lost 2000 men in deaths alone during the battle while Smith's total casualties were 170 men²⁹⁵. De la Tour said that 900 of the grenadiers alone were lost in addition to others, including the Bakshi²⁹⁶. Haidar was without doubt seriously disturbed by the losses sustained and after dusk he fell back to his camp to regroup. Thus Smith was left unmolested during his retreat.

The check he had received at Changama was the Mysore ruler's first serious setback against the British during the war. This makes the study of the tactics used during the battle worthwhile. Haidar engaged in a series of frontal attacks against the British positions instead of trying to outflank them or take them in the rear. Probably after the success at Kaveripattinam he felt confident enough in the quality of his troops to wage war directly on the European soldiery. But this was not to be as Smith had prepared his dispositions well and the well-trained British musketry and their heavier cannons took a dreadful toll on the Mysore troops. Wilks said that the musketry of the allied armies were very 'ill-directed'. But this seems to be in keeping with his prejudices. The same musketry and cannon fire had proved effective in Kaveripattinam. Also Smith praised the calibre of Haidar Ali's army in his report to Madras as follows, "Hyder Ali is a good soldier, his troops are the best disciplined and appointed of any Indian army that took the field."²⁹⁷ Thus it seems that the performance of Haidar's troops was creditable enough and it is likely that the British army suffered many casualties during the battle. In a similar vein, De La Tour belittled the Madras gunners, saying that Haidar possessed 60 large pieces of cannon with which he wreaked havoc on the British at Changama while the Madras Army artillery could do little against the Mysore troops due to the "difficulty of aiming well in pointing downwards."²⁹⁸ Again this cannot be true for two reasons. Firstly, this is inconsistent with his earlier statement that Haidar had 24 cannons. Secondly, the same artillery had been unable to make a breach in the

²⁹² Kirmani, op. cit., p. 250.

²⁹³ Ibid.

²⁹⁴ Punganuri, p. 16.

²⁹⁵ Wilks, Vol II, p. 29.

²⁹⁶ M.M.D.L.T., p. 182.

²⁹⁷ Smith to Bouchier, *M.M.S.P.*, September 19, 1767, cited in *Establishment of British Influence in Mysore AD 1760-1800*, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis by G. Kaliyamurthy for Madurai Kamaraj University, 1991, p. 38; Tamil Nadu State Archives (hereafter TNSA), Chennai.

²⁹⁸ M.M.D.L.T., p. 182.

citadel at Kaveripattinam which suggests that their calibre could not have been large. Also, he admitted that Haidar suffered hundreds of casualties during the battle of Changama which implies that the artillery proved devastating. But Smith's letter does suggest that he too suffered at the hands of Haidar.

British chroniclers like Wilks and Wilson hailed Changama as the first British victory of the Anglo-Mysore War of 1767. But it was a pyrrhic victory for Colonel Smith as he had barely maintained his defensive positions and had to resume his retreat as soon as the fighting ended. Although Haidar had suffered a severe reverse in the battle by losing hundreds of his most well-trained troops, it was only a temporary setback. It did not impede his progress and he could resume his advance as soon as he had regrouped. Also, the Mysore cavalry, which was his main striking force, was still intact and with it he could harass and cut off the communications of the opposing forces. Colonel Smith's position on the other hand was desperate and if not reinforced and resupplied soon, his contingent would lose its effectiveness as a fighting force. Mohammad Ali's messengers had assured him that plenty of provisions were available at Thiruvannamalai; and he reached it after twenty seven hours of forced marching without stopping.

On the morning of September 4 i.e. the day after the battle, the combined armies of Haidar and the Nizam and the European troops in their employ were engaged in sorting out the remains left on the battlefield by the retreating Madras Army. These included some kitchen utensils belonging to Colonel Smith as well as two trunks containing valuables which belonged to his deputy Major Bonjour, who was from Geneva but had enlisted in the Madras Army. They also recovered two small cannons of a calibre of three pounds as well as several cannonballs and some sacks of rice which had been dumped in the river²⁹⁹. Wilks also mentioned that two cannons were left behind³⁰⁰. Many soldiers, both European and Indian, were able to enrich themselves on the plunder seized. De la Tour said that the British troops were not harassed during the retreat as the allied armies were fully involved in the plundering of the abandoned British camp. But it is equally likely that Haidar wanted to take stock of the situation with his troops before they regrouped and renewed their pursuit.

The Council of Madras by now had a clear idea of the gravity of the situation and the formidable challenge they were dealing with. In their discussions, they included subjects

²⁹⁹ M.M.D.L.T., pp. 182-183.

³⁰⁰ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 30.

about how the Mysore ruler was extremely ambitious and had now assumed menacing proportions, his close relations with the French and his support for the claimants to thrones of Arcot and Thanjavur viz. Mahfuz Khan and Raza Ali Khan respectively. So their goal now was the complete overthrow of Haidar Ali. Even Clive in Calcutta advocated the “overthrow of Hyder Ali’s usurped power.”³⁰¹ Therefore, after deliberation the Council decided that “his reduction is our most principal object as the only sure method to give peace to the Carnatic and stability to our possessions. The sooner we extirpate him and restore the ancient family of the Rajahs the better.”³⁰² Working to this end, they thought of securing an alliance with the Marathas and wrote to the Bombay government to send feelers to Madhava Rao³⁰³. The terms to be offered to the Peshwa were the deposition of Haidar, the restoration of the erstwhile kings to thrones of Mysore and Bidanur with them paying *chauth* to the Marathas, and the annexation of Sira and the adjoining districts by Mohammad Ali³⁰⁴. But as Madhava Rao was involved with his own affairs regarding Raghunath Rao and Janoji Bhonsle, he did not respond immediately.

Although the Madras government had now considered Haidar Ali as their main adversary, their preparations to meet the challenge still proved dilatory and inadequate. They were under the impression that the troops that they had despatched under Wood to join Smith would be sufficient to respond to any threats. They still didn’t consider sending additional reinforcements nor of providing supplies for the army. The task of victualling the Madras Army was left to Mohammad Ali and his ill-equipped entourage. But the victory at Changama had considerably raised their hopes of being able to defeat the combined armies. They wrote to Smith “We imagine you are well apprized how important a service it would be if Hyder Alli could be made a prisoner, or shall fall in battle.”³⁰⁵ This didn’t take into account the fact that Smith was retreating and could in no way exploit the victory. Also, their approach towards Madhava Rao lacked sagacity as he would have been in no position to assist them at that time. The Council’s lack of sound decisions would play no small part in the genesis of the sticky situations that the Madras Army would often find itself in. It suggests that there was a lack of counsel about military matters from an experienced soldier to the governing body. This is not surprising as none of the Council members including the

³⁰¹ Sheikh Ali, p. 85.

³⁰² Madras to Bengal, *M.M.S.P.*, published in Sheikh Ali, p. 85.

³⁰³ Sheikh Ali, p. 85.

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

³⁰⁵ Bouchier to Smith, September 14, *M.M.S.P.*, published in Sheikh Ali, p. 87.

brothers Bouchier had had any previous military experience and had only their laurels in the Carnatic wars to rely upon.

The Battle of Thiruvannamalai

Colonel Joseph Smith reached the town of Thiruvannamalai on the night of September 4 and set up camp there. He was in dire need of supplies to feed his men and horses. But, contrary to expectations, there were limited stocks of rice in the town and it was mostly in the form of paddy which would have to be husked before being edible³⁰⁶. However, it was sufficient for his immediate needs; and therefore his army bivouacked in the town giving the troops some much needed rest and relaxation. But as Smith's contingent had many wounded, quick movement was not possible. Wilks said that the morale was so low that a lieutenant named Hitchcock deserted Smith's army and tried to join Haidar but was suspected and imprisoned. This is not corroborated in the French or Indian sources. The food stocks in the town were exhausted within three days and Smith was obliged to send foraging parties to the countryside for their renewal. An additional concern was that the town did not have a fort and was thus not very defensible. The situation greatly eased on September 8 when Colonel Wood came with his contingent of 1000 Europeans and 5000 sepoy and fresh supplies to Thiruvannamalai to join the depleted forces of Smith³⁰⁷. Wilks belittled the abilities of Haidar for not preventing this junction but it is more likely that the Mysore Nawab was unaware of the movements of Wood and hence did not obstruct it.

In the meantime, Haidar Ali had not been idle. Joining up with the slow-moving forces of the Nizam, he encamped around eight kilometres from Thiruvannamalai by September 5 and took care to put a stockade around the camp to ward off night attacks. With the junction of Wood with Smith Haidar Ali had to deal with a new situation on hand. He had left his camp followers and most of his irregulars on the banks of the Palar in order to increase the mobility of his army³⁰⁸. But the Nizam still maintained his retinue which included the *zanana* (the women folk) and other camp followers. After taking a beating at Changama, Haidar now had a new respect for the British forces and was reluctant to attack them in their prepared defensive positions; and now he had the increased British army under Wood also to deal with which, as usual, De La Tour exaggerated the size of, saying that the Madras Army now amounted to 25,000 troops with 4500 Europeans among them. Haidar's cavalry would not be

³⁰⁶ Wilks, Vol II, p. 30.

³⁰⁷ Ibid, p. 31.

³⁰⁸ M.M.D.L.T., pp. 183-184.

useful in the hilly terrain or in the enclosed space inside the town. If he attempted to force the town he was likely to suffer heavy casualties as he had at Changama. Therefore, his only alternative was to draw out the British army into the open spaces where his cavalry and his numerous infantry would be at an advantage.

Accordingly, Haidar made a plan to entice the British troops into coming out of the town to give battle to his forces. To achieve this, he made a parade of his forces outside the town and sometimes moved his cannons towards the buildings in order to provoke the Madras Army³⁰⁹. This almost succeeded initially. When he was returning from a foraging expedition on September 14, Smith noticed that a battery of cannons was advancing towards the town with a contingent of cavalry. On seeing him, the battery retreated while the cavalry tried to attack him and was driven off³¹⁰. Smith determined on attacking the allied forces of Haidar and the Nizam the following morning and so set out from the town at dawn. But then he noticed that Haidar occupied a position behind a marsh. If he tried to cross the marsh he would be at a severe disadvantage; and so he retreated to the camp again³¹¹. By now the retreating monsoon was in progress and the recurrent rains impeded the progress of both sides in the conflict. But Smith had limited stocks of foodgrains at his disposal as compared to his adversaries. Also the opposing cavalry laid waste the countryside making foraging more difficult. Haidar seemed in no hurry to attack the British forces. Past experience had shown the risks of attacking strongly defended positions; and the Mysore Nawab was aware of the precarious supply state of the Madras Army. He supposed that sooner or later they would either have to fight their way out or surrender.

This war of nerves continued for the next ten days. When Haidar and his army would break camp and set up a new location, the British would follow up with a movement of their own but would make no attempt to attack or break out. The situation had stalemated. While this manoeuvring and counter manoeuvring continued, each side formulated other plans in order to pursue their aims. A letter written by Charles Raitt, the Paymaster of the Army, to the Secretary to the Madras government written on September 21 symbolised the mood in the British camp. He said, "Every gentleman in camp is greatly distressed for both cloaths (sic) and victuals. As for myself, I have hardly shirt, or waistcoat to put on, and I believe there has not been such a thing as a bit of biscuit, or drop of wine at any person's table in camp for

³⁰⁹ M.M.D.L.T., pp. 183-184.

³¹⁰ Wilks, Vol II, p. 31.

³¹¹ Ibid; Robson, pp. 46-47.

some days past, not even Colonel Smith's."³¹² Smith held a council of war in the town where the opinion of the majority was in the favour of evacuating Thiruvannamalai and retreating to their barracks in Madras³¹³. This would enable them to care for their sick and wounded while sheltering from the torrential rains.

Seeing that the opposing armies were at an impasse, the French commander in Haidar's camp proposed taking a large detachment of the European trained infantry to raid the British settlements along the Coromandel coast such as Cuddalore and Madras etc³¹⁴. Haidar was reluctant to send the cream of his infantry on this mission as it would mean a considerable reduction of his strength should it be required at present. He also entertained a suspicion that the French commander might desert to the environs of Pondicherry during the march. As an alternative, he proposed that a contingent of cavalry would be sent to raid the environs of Madras. Also, he felt that it was time to groom his 17-year-old son Tipu as an independent commander. So he said, "My son has never yet had any command, it will be doing him a great pleasure to give him charge of this operation, at the head of five thousand horse."³¹⁵ The main expectation was that the British forces would then be recalled to defend the city. Consequently, Tipu set off with the cavalry along with his instructor Ghazi Khan to attack the Madras territory in the third week of September. Haidar now returned to his standoff with Smith and Wood. He positioned his artillery on the top of a hill to bombard the British positions and offered monetary reward to gunners who seemed to work the guns well. But the guns did little more than create a noisy disturbance as most of the time the cannonballs did not penetrate the British positions.³¹⁶ Either due to poor marksmanship or small calibre the guns failed to make an impact. This does not reflect highly on the gunnery practices of the Mysore army.

In the afternoon of September 26, the allied forces of Haidar and the Nizam moved to a position on the left of the British forces and, erecting a battery of some 16 cannons, proceeded to give a cannonade³¹⁷. The ground between the two opposing sides was covered with a marsh which impeded movement. Smith sent his troops to make a detour towards a hill some distance to his left. He correctly surmised that the hill marked the end of the marsh and

³¹² Raitt's letter to the Secretary, September 21, published in Wilson, *History of the Madras Army*, p. 243.

³¹³ Wilks, Vol II, p. 32.

³¹⁴ M.M.D.L.T., p. 190.

³¹⁵ Ibid, p. 191.

³¹⁶ Ibid, p. 192.

³¹⁷ Wilks, Vol II, p. 34.

the start of solid ground and if he took it, it would enable him to outflank the opposing army. He accordingly moved troops from his right towards the hill to the northeast. According to his despatches, the first line was led by Wood and followed by Smith himself³¹⁸. The second line was led by Lt. Col. Tod and the rear was under Major Fitzgerald. Already a small detachment under Captain Cook was on the hill to act as scouts. As these troops scaled the hill they faced a large hostile contingent. According to De La Tour, these were the troops of the Nizam who did not want to remain an idle spectator and wanted to appropriate some glory for himself. Therefore, at 3 o' clock in the afternoon, he sent his entire infantry to seize the hill on which Captain Cook had stationed his troops³¹⁹. They arrived at the time when Smith was making his movements on the hill. Smith's letter to the Madras Council gives a detailed account of the battle.

Colonel Smith immediately formed his troops into battle array with his lines facing the opponents and had the advantage of being at higher altitude. Captains Cook, Cosby and Baillie were ordered to advance with their battalions, the 8th, 5th and 6th respectively, and drive the opposing troops from their positions while the cannons under Smith's command would give them covering fire³²⁰. At the same time, Captain Cowley guarded the right flank of the British lines from incursions by cavalry. The first and second British lines advanced in a coordinated manner and soon discovered the main body of the opposing forces on the hill drawn up in battle array and armed with rockets, gingalls, matchlocks and a few cannons³²¹. The right flank of the Nizam's army rested against the hill with swampy ground in front. Four large sections of cavalry formed the first line with the infantry interspersed in the gaps between them. The section on the right was able to put up a fire which caused some casualties among Smith's forces. But the British advanced under the cover of a brisk artillery bombardment. Their 12-pounder cannons were of a higher calibre than the opposing forces' and, though unwieldy, were able to wreak havoc on the cavalry and the infantry. Several cavalry charges against the British positions were beaten off. Smith then followed up with a bayonet charge against the Nizam's troops which completely broke their line and sent them retreating pell-mell to their own lines³²².

³¹⁸Smith's letter to Madras dated October 3, published in Wilson, op. cit., pp.243-248.

³¹⁹ M.M.D.L.T., p. 194.

³²⁰ Smith's letter on October 3, published in Wilson, p. 244.

³²¹ Ibid, p. 245; Fortescue, p. 119.

³²²Wilson, p. 246; Malleeson, p. 216; Robson, pp. 50, 51; Sinha, pp. 116-117.

Wilks and De La Tour differed in their accounts of the battle and its aftermath. The latter said that during their retreat the Nizam's forces went through Haidar's camp in wild disorder, thus contributing to the confusion in the ranks of the allied armies. As they were between the British and the Mysore troops, Haidar could not use his infantry till the British had already formed into the lines of battle. He had little artillery ammunition left due to the discharges of the previous few days and thus was obliged to use his cavalry against the British³²³. The right wing of the cavalry comprising of hussars and dragoons assailed the British but it was beaten back by the accurate musketry and gunnery of the Madras Army. The left wing made an initial charge but after being repelled kept a respectful distance³²⁴. When the British line advanced Haidar felt that he could beat them as they were superior in artillery and therefore he conducted an orderly retreat to his camp. On the other hand, Wilks does not mention as to which king's troops were encountered by the British on the hillside. He said that the confederate soldiers retreated from the hill in wild disorder in front of the advancing troops of Smith³²⁵. However, he does mention that the troops of Haidar conducted an orderly retreat to their own lines³²⁶. This lends credence to the claim of De la Tour that it was the Nizam's army that was defeated on the hillside and which caused the chaos in the camp.

Wilks went on to say that Haidar pressed the Nizam to order a retreat to his troops. But the Nizam, on horseback, remained fixated on holding the line. But when the British line began to advance, even he realised the futility of further resistance and commenced a withdrawal to his camp which was covered by Haidar's infantry³²⁷. As his artillery and cavalry retreated they came across the elephants in the rear which carried his womenfolk in covered litters. He gave the order to the elephants to turn about and retreat. But the chief queen said, "This elephant has not been instructed so to turn; he follows the standard of the empire."³²⁸ This stubbornness caused several elephants and the surrounding retinue to fall to the Madras artillery and contributed further to the confusion reigning on the battlefield. By this time the British were close on the heels of the allied armies and they quickly occupied the forward positions which had been abandoned and seized nine cannons (De la Tour said only one cannon). Nizam Ali, with a select body of cavalry, fled as quickly as possible and reached the

³²³ M.M.D.L.T., pp. 195-196.

³²⁴ Ibid.

³²⁵ Wilks, Vol. II, pp. 35-36.

³²⁶ Ibid.

³²⁷ Ibid.

³²⁸ Ibid.

pass of Changama by nightfall, leaving Rukh-ud-daulah to look after the evacuation of the rest of his entourage³²⁹.

The British followed Haidar to his camp which was located behind a large pond and between two hills where he had erected redoubts³³⁰. Smith was reluctant to attack this place where he would be at a disadvantage, especially in the darkness. So they set up camp where they were and mainly directed cannon fire on the opposing camp which did not do much damage. Haidar had his hands full that night in reorganizing his camp which had been thrown into confusion by the headlong flight of the Nizam. He knew that the battle was lost and the British would soon resume their advance. The only prudent course now was to retreat and join the army of the Nizam near the pass of Changama. In fact, Smith intended to attack the camp again at around midnight and he detailed Major Fitzgerald with a company of grenadiers for this mission³³¹. Wilks said that Haidar planted his spy in the British camp who offered to guide the contingent to its quarry but then got him lost in the pond near the camp³³². But this seems to be his usual propaganda against the Mysore Nawab. The planting of a guide was not mentioned by De la Tour, Kirmani or even in Smith's letter to the Council. Smith said in his letter that Fitzgerald lost his way in the swamps and the paddy fields in the surroundings and ultimately returned to the camp unsuccessful in his mission. But he was able to seize 37 cannons which had been abandoned by the opposition³³³.

This respite in the attack enabled Haidar to withdraw his retinue across the pass of Changama throughout the night of September 26. De la Tour gave a vivid account of his retreat³³⁴. The path which led through the pass was narrow and winding and strewn with rocks and undergrowth. It was soon clogged with the train of bullocks and horses and carts. Soon the pass split into two, one which the Nizam had taken in his flight. As a result, the path was strewn with abandoned odds and ends which contributed to further commotion. What's more, Haidar was directing the troops' movement with the help of the light of more than a hundred torches³³⁵. This was an ill-advised move as it would alert his enemies to his position and could cause them to attack. But to Haidar's relief no further attacks took place that night

³²⁹ Wilks, Vol. II, pp. 35-36.

³³⁰ M.M.D.L.T., p. 196.

³³¹ Wilks, Vol II, p. 39.

³³² Ibid.

³³³ Robson, p. 51; Smith's letter on October 3, published in Wilson, pp. 246-247.

³³⁴ M.M.D.L.T., pp. 197-199.

³³⁵ Ibid.

because of Fitzgerald's losing of his way. De la Tour said that if even a small party of British troops had attacked the camp then they would have been able to wreak havoc, especially among the Nizam's contingent. Haidar spent the night having the carts repaired and then sending his equipment and baggage across the pass in them³³⁶.

With the coming of dawn, the Madras Army resumed its advance. Haidar immediately formed his army into the line of battle at the entrance to the pass. From this position, he covered his troops' retreat through the pass. Wilks said that his personal retinue consisted of 300 choice infantry, dressed in scarlet uniforms, armed with lances made of bamboo 18 feet long and decorated with top to bottom with silver plates in a spiral manner³³⁷. The British did not force a battle on him and were content by firing a few cannons and muskets after him. It was probably because they considered themselves unprepared to take on their adversary in a prepared defensive position. For the rest of the day they were involved in taking the booty left behind by the allied armies during their flight. They seized several plates of gold and silver as well as 55 cannons, most of them being the possessions of Nizam Ali Khan³³⁸. Haidar does not seem to have made any hostile move and he was fully involved in covering his retreat. Again dusk curtailed operations and Smith was obliged to break off the pursuit in order to find supplies for his overstretched army.

So ended the battle of Thiruvannamalai on the night of September 27 after nearly a month of manoeuvring. The allied armies of Mysore and the Nizam had been routed after suffering heavy losses. Wilks estimated the casualties among the Madras Army as a maximum of 150 killed and wounded and gives a figure of over 4000 for its opponents³³⁹. De la Tour put the number of killed among the allied armies as no more than 400³⁴⁰. He said that only a Topass was captured from among the Mysorean troops and the remaining wounded were taken away. Though both the accounts have to be scrutinized carefully here, De la Tour's casualty figure seems to be an obvious attempt to lessen the scale of the defeat. Also, he inflated the number of British troops to several thousand. But Wilks' figures are also suspect for exaggeration though probably more accurate than the former's. Also he did not mention the capture of any prisoners on September 26 and 27, echoing the claims of the French author. This suggests that Haidar's losses were relatively light and he could carry off the wounded from the

³³⁶ M.M.D.L.T., pp. 197-199.

³³⁷ Wilks, Vol II, p. 40.

³³⁸ Ibid.

³³⁹ Ibid, p. 41.

³⁴⁰ M.M.D.L.T., p. 196.

battlefield. But the fact that both armies had to retreat in a helter-skelter manner indicates that the casualties suffered, at least in the Nizam's army, were high and they were incapable of combat during that time. This was the second time in the duration of one month that Haidar has suffered a defeat in a positional battle against the Madras Army (the first being at Changama). However, the whole blame for the defeat did not rest with him alone.

An analysis of the battle shows that the situation was more complex. Kirmani said that the issue was settled by the British attacking the Nizam's camp on the flank and routing his army, seizing his tents and standards which caused him to flee in haste³⁴¹. This corroborates De la Tour's statement that it was the Nizam who panicked first. In his account of the battle, Wilks mainly described the chaos in the Hyderabad ruler's camp and his precipitate flight. He also said that the 41 cannons seized during the pursuit by Smith's forces belonged to the Nizam as did several gold and silver plates³⁴². Also, Ramachandra Rao Punganuri said in his memoirs that "On the day of the battle all of the Nizam's Artillery (sic) were captured by the English (sic)."³⁴³ This supports the claim that the British engaged the troops of the Nizam on the hill and completely routed them. The headlong retreat by the Nizam and his troops and the resulting chaos caused the allies' front to disintegrate. There seems some truth in the statement by De la Tour that Haidar was unable to use his infantry against the British lines because the Nizam's entourage came in between. But it is unlikely that Haidar could have prevented defeat in any event. His cavalry detachments had fallen back under withering fire from the British lines. Also, his infantry had earlier faced the British at Changama and had been found wanting there also. But it is very likely that the scale of the defeat would have been much reduced if not for the disintegration of the Nizam's army. The statements by Wilks regarding Haidar's orderly retreat and the lack of any prisoners by Smith suggest that, but for the precipitate flight of Nizam Ali Khan, Haidar would have been able to conduct an orderly retreat without suffering many casualties and would not have had to abandon any of his possessions.

³⁴¹ Kirmani, pp. 253-254.

³⁴² Wilks, Vol II, p. 40.

³⁴³ Punganuri, p. 17.



Above: Historical portrait of Krishnagiri fort which commanded the mountain passes in the Carnatic. Portrait by Sir Alexander Allan. Source: <http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/apac/other/019xzz000000378u00020000.html>, (accessed on February 22, 2016).



Above: Bayonet charge by the British army during the Second Anglo-Mysore War in 1783. Similar tactics were used in the First Anglo-Mysore War. Portrait by Richard Simkin. Source: Brown University Anne S. K. Brown Collection: <http://dl.lib.brown.edu/catalog/catalog.php>, (accessed on February 22, 2016).

Tipu Sultan's raid on Madras

In the meantime, Tipu Sultan was on his way with a cavalry contingent to raid the towns in the Madras Presidency in the company of experienced commanders like Ghazi Khan and Makhdoom Ali Khan as well as Mir Ali Raza Khan³⁴⁴. It may be considered odd that Haidar would send his most capable general, Makhdoom Ali Khan, on this expedition during the siege of Thiruvannamalai. But it is probable that Haidar wanted to groom his son in the presence of experienced commanders. Also, he seems to have thought that his French trained infantry and cavalry would be sufficient to hold the line. Though Wilks and De la Tour do not mention Makhdoom in the company of Tipu during the raid on Madras, it is very likely that he was involved as the same authors did not mention him playing any role in the later battle at Thiruvannamalai. The letters from the officials at Madras written on September 28 discuss the raid. Therefore, the attack on the countryside must have begun a day or two earlier as the cavalry would need at least a couple of days to reach the environs of the city and then begin the attack. Not surprisingly, the raid was described in great detail by De la Tour while a very small description, and bereft of details, was given by Robson, Wilks, Wilson and other British authors.

In the late eighteenth century, Madras was one of the richest emporia on the eastern coast of India. The British military garrison was stationed in Fort St. George which also housed the British civilians and their employees. It consisted of around 200 European troops and 600 sepoy at that time as the bulk of the Madras Army had been sent to fight against Haidar³⁴⁵. The Indian section outside the fort was known as Black Town which had a settled population of around 4000 people. But at the moment the population there was considerably higher owing to an exodus from the fighting in the Carnatic. The Black Town formed the main trading area of the city and was inhabited by Europeans and non-Europeans of various hues who came to buy and sell at its marketplaces. This included a large colony of Armenians who were considered to be very wealthy. Along with them there were Gujarati moneylenders and jewellers trading in pearls, gems and corals etc³⁴⁶. But at that moment this wealthy city was lying undefended. There was no complete wall around the Black Town to save it from predators. Colonel John Call had initiated the building of ramparts along the north and west

³⁴⁴ Kirmani, p. 251.

³⁴⁵ M.M.D.L.T., p. 199.

³⁴⁶ Ibid; C.A. Bayly, p. 59.

of the city since 1764³⁴⁷. But they were still unfinished at the time of the war. Some preliminary brickwork had been executed but even these were allowed to fall into disrepair, especially in the north face³⁴⁸. The British were still confident of holding the town as they had been able to beat back the attacks of the French in the Second and Third Carnatic Wars as well as the attacks by local chieftains like Chanda Sahib and Murari Rao.

De la Tour gave the most detailed account of the raid which is, unsurprisingly, very critical of the British. However, his account must be read with caution as he considerably exaggerates the exploits of his patrons. He said that he was present at the battle of Thiruvannamalai and he personally advised Haidar to attack the Black Town and put it to the torch but he did not personally accompany Tipu on the expedition³⁴⁹. He said that this was because the British might recognise him and initiate retaliatory measures against him and his family. This statement seems to be suspect as the British could already have discovered him at Thiruvannamalai, if not earlier. The real reason seems to be that Haidar was reluctant to let his European mercenaries go away just on the eve of the battle. Tipu's contingent, with Ghazi Khan and Makhdoom, arrived on the outskirts of Madras Presidency on September 28 and probably had no difficulty in entering due to the inadequate defences. The British governor Charles Bouchier had his first inkling of it when a crowd ran past Fort St. George crying "Maratta, Maratta" because the Marathas usually were the main intruders in the Carnatic-Payanghat region³⁵⁰. When another such crowd passed by a short while later, the officials thought of investigating the matter. But Bouchier was unwilling to believe that the Mysore cavalry could have slipped past his fortress garrisons who would have duly informed him and said that he would punish the person who next caused a panic with a *chaubuc* (whip made up of a long strap of leather at the end of a wooden stick).

But the governor soon had to change his mind. Soon a crowd, including wounded men, came from St. Thomas Mount and said that hostile forces were ravaging that township. Now Bouchier had no doubt about the presence of Haidar's troops in the vicinity. He and most of the Council fled towards the coast where they boarded a small ship lying at anchor and did not debark it till the Mysore forces had withdrawn; otherwise they would have been made

³⁴⁷ Henry Davidson Love, *VESTIGES OF OLD MADRAS: 1640-1800: TRACED FROM THE EAST INDIA COMPANY'S RECORDS PRESERVED AT FORT ST. GEORGE AND THE INDIA OFFICE, AND FROM OTHER SOURCES, IN FOUR VOLUMES*, Vol. II, Asian Educational Services, Madras, 1996, p. 603.

³⁴⁸ Letter of Call to the Directors dated October 1, 1767, published in H.D. Love, op. cit., p. 603.

³⁴⁹ M.M.D.L.T., p. 201.

³⁵⁰ Ibid, p. 192.

prisoners³⁵¹. This sentiment is echoed in the diary at Fort St. George which said “This Morning, Parties of the Enemy’s Horse were scampering about the Company’s Garden House, Mr. James Bouchier’s Garden, and Chidandre Pettah, on which the Picket from Hog Hill crossed the River and marched towards the Garden House, on whose Approach the Enemy retired from them, but continued about St. Thome’ and in the Neighbourhood till the Evening, when they marched towards the Mount.”³⁵² Thus it seems clear that Tipu and his cavalry were able to cause havoc in the environs of Madras and came near to capturing the governor and many Council members. De la Tour said that the escapees included Nawab Mohammad Ali and his son but this is unlikely as Mohammad Ali would have been in his palace in Arcot during the monsoon season. On the other hand, Wilks reduced his description of the raid to one pithy statement that Tipu Sultan with Ghazi Khan was attacking “the very houses of the council of Madras, when he heard the result of the battle of Trinomalee”.³⁵³ He spared no pains in trying to shield the Madras establishment and belittle the accomplishments of the opposition. But the records in Fort St. George give a clearer picture indicating that the governor was forced to flee.

The terror-stricken population of the Black Town rushed to take refuge in Fort St. George, the only practicable citadel in the vicinity, abandoning their dwellings and their possessions. Since the British officials had not given orders to close its gates, the refugees flooded into the premises and filled every nook and corner including the glacis of the fort. The governor, on his arrival into fort, was at a loss as to what action to take and turned to Colonel John Call who was the most experienced military man present³⁵⁴. The latter armed all the Europeans, including civilians, in the Fort and along with a company of sepoys and some other irregulars stood guard at the entrance of the Black Town. This is confirmed in a letter from the Council to the Directors of the Company which said that all the civil servants of the Company as well as the Armenians and Portuguese were given arms³⁵⁵. Tipu took the route to the place via St. Thomas’ Mount. However, this took him past the walls of the fort where the cannons fired upon his horsemen³⁵⁶. He met with his commanders as to the course of the action. Ghazi Khan, whom De la Tour called Chaki Shah the grand almoner, said that Haidar’s orders had been to ravage the countryside of Madras; and so they should do it without attacking the fort

³⁵¹ M.M.D.L.T., p. 193.

³⁵² Fort St. George Diary dated September 28, published in H.D. Love, *Vestiges*, p. 596.

³⁵³ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 41.

³⁵⁴ M.M.D.L.T., pp. 199-200.

³⁵⁵ Letter from Fort St. George to Company dated October 8, published in H.D. Love, *Vestiges*, p. 596.

³⁵⁶ M.M.D.L.T., p. 201.

or the Black Town. The reasoning behind this was that he did not want to expose Tipu to any unnecessary dangers, knowing how fond Haidar was of his son. The fort was defended by its walls and its cannons while Call's improvised militia guarded the Black Town. Though they would not stand against a heavy attack there was still the chance of a stray shot hitting Tipu.

So the horsemen contented themselves by attacking houses in the countryside. The artisans, craftsmen and the merchants outside the city were pillaged except those who were ready to pay a ransom³⁵⁷. It seems that an English merchant of French descent named Debonnaire was the only one who could escape the plundering. As he was a good friend of Ghazi Khan, the looting of his house on the Mount of St. Thomas was forbidden. However, on the approach of the cavalry his servants fled with his family and children; and Ghazi Khan decided to quarter himself there for time being. He forbade the looting of the house and reassured the remaining servants there. An anecdote is described here. Tipu, while visiting Ghazi Khan at the house, was interested in a microscope kept there. The latter would not allow him to take it but wrote to Debonnaire asking its price who replied that he offered it as a present to the prince³⁵⁸. This incident is probable as Tipu had a lifelong interest in scientific instruments. But on September 29, the second day of the raid, Tipu received a message from a *harkara* on a camel (dromedaries were sometimes used to carry messages when horses were required for the battlefield) from his father informing him about the defeat at Thiruvannamalai and asking him to rejoin the main army. De la Tour was of the opinion that the messenger was actually a British spy sent to draw the Mysorean cavalry away from Madras. But this is wrong as there is no mention of this stratagem in British sources. Also, Kirmani wrote that Haidar sent a camel rider to his son asking him to return³⁵⁹. So it can be concluded that the message was genuine and Haidar was asking him to return in order to take stock of the situation and also to protect his flanks with the cavalry that had been sent.

Tipu retreated from Madras on September 30. He took with him four monks and a priest of the Jesuit order from the church at the Mount of St. Thomas. These clergymen had not fled as they had heard that Haidar generally would not attack Europeans. But as the Mysore Nawab now needed intelligence and information about the Madras government particularly about the strength of the British forces and if reinforcements were coming from Europe and elsewhere; and so he had instructed Tipu to bring him some important personages who would be familiar

³⁵⁷ M.M.D.L.T., p. 201.

³⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 202.

³⁵⁹ Kirmani, p. 254.

with the situation there³⁶⁰. This is confirmed by the letter from Madras to the Company directors which states that the Mysore troops, about 4000 strong, remained in the vicinity till September 29 and then retired to the Mount and then decamped the next day³⁶¹. The letter also mentions that the Mysorean cavalry plundered St. Thomas' Mount and adjacent places and "carried off several of the Inhabitants without our being able to hinder them."³⁶² This most probably refers to the Jesuits taken by Tipu. These hostages were seated on the back of camels and embarked on an uncomfortable five-day journey on their mounts along with their captors to rendezvous with the camp of Haidar³⁶³.

Thus Tipu Sultan's first and last raid on the city of Madras came to an end³⁶⁴. This was indicative of one of the greatest missed opportunities during the war and the lack of a strategic vision among the Indian rulers and commanders and their inability to look beyond immediate gains. If Tipu had persisted in attacking the Black Town or even in making a sally against Fort St. George, it would have delivered a powerful psychological blow against the British. Madras was not only the paramount British base in peninsular India but also a great source of their wealth. An attack would have disrupted the economy seriously impairing the ability of the Madras government to wage war. As news of the attack on Madras reached Europe through the other European settlements like the French at Pondicherry and the Danish at Tranquebar, it caused a severe crisis of confidence among the Company's directors. The price of the Company's shares at the London Stock Exchange fell from 275 pounds sterling to 222 pounds³⁶⁵. Hence, if the cavalry attack had been seriously pressed, the Madras government would not only have run out of money for the war effort but also would have lost the will to fight. Then the Council of Madras would have seriously considered making a peace settlement with the opposing forces as the Bombay and Calcutta governments had not been thinking of involving themselves in the war as yet. But Haidar's defeat at Thiruvannamalai and the withdrawal of Tipu's cavalry gave fresh impetus to the Madras government to pursue its war aims.

³⁶⁰ M.M.D.L.T., p. 203.

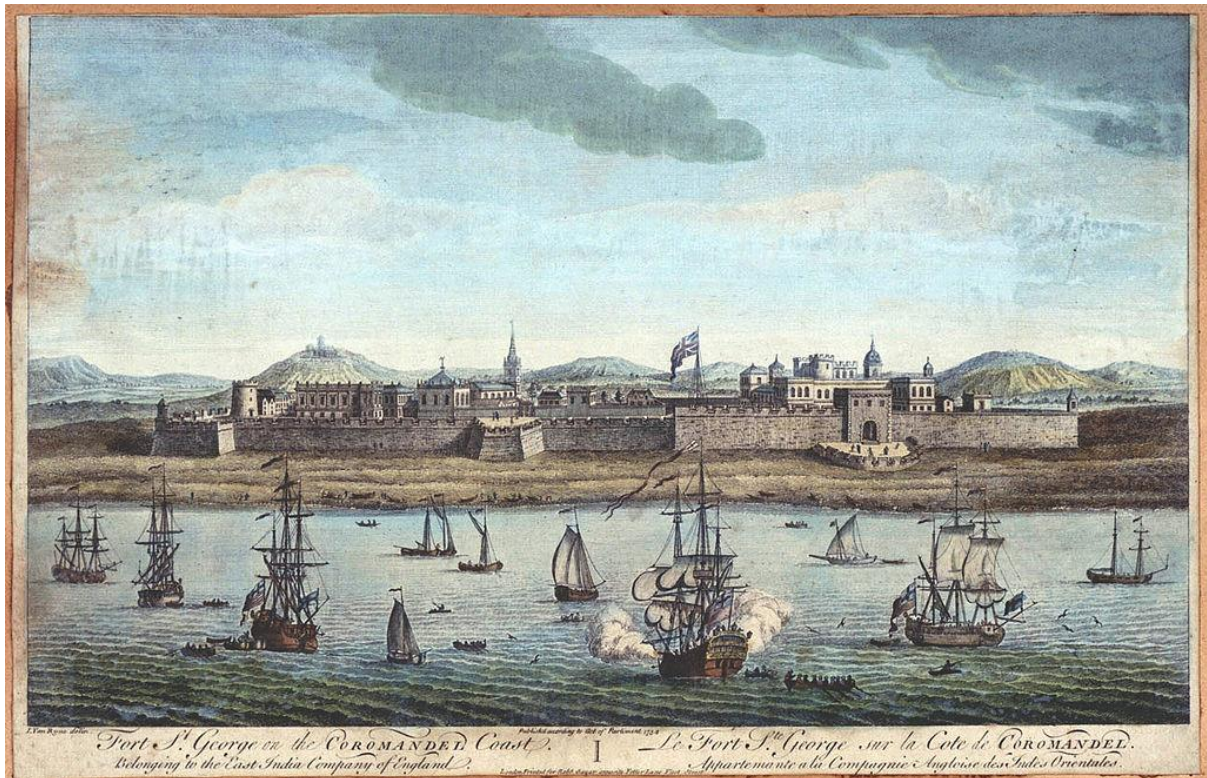
³⁶¹ Letter from Fort St. George on October 8, in H.D. Love, *Vestiges*, p. 596.

³⁶² Ibid.

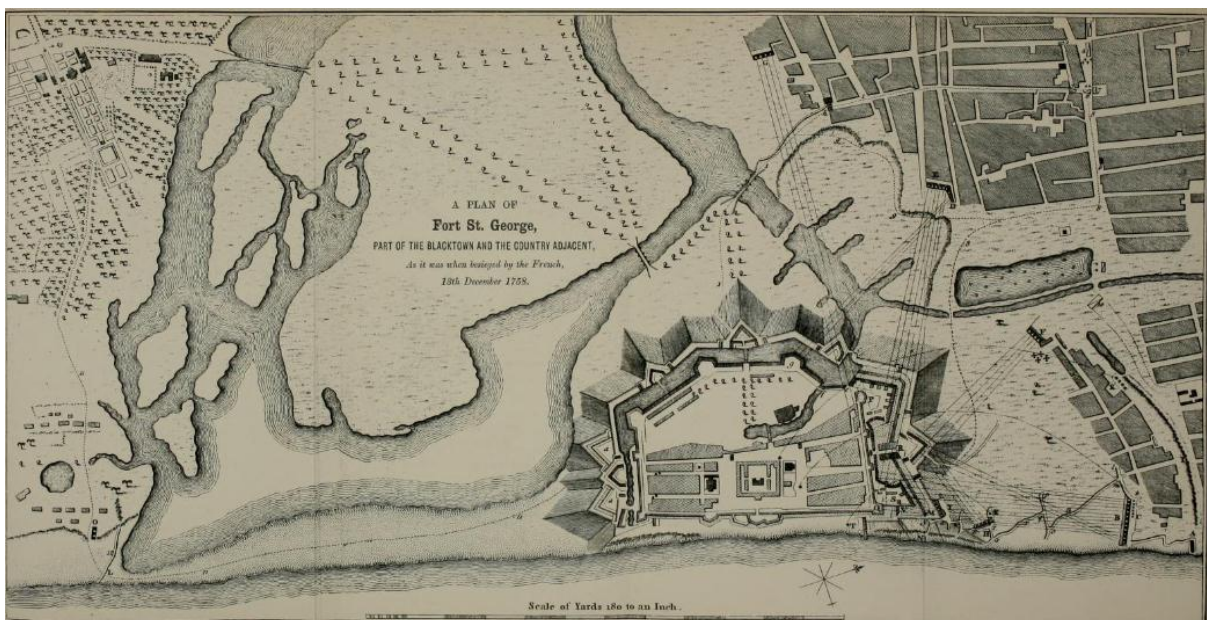
³⁶³ M.M.D.L.T., p. 203.

³⁶⁴ Malleon, p. 217; Robson, pp. 53-54.

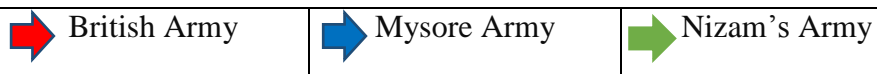
³⁶⁵ M.M.D.L.T., p. 202.



Above: Historical portrait of Fort St. George, Madras, overlooking the harbour. Portrait by Jan van Ryne. Source: <http://collections.rmg.co.uk/collections/objects/105996.html>, (accessed on February 22, 2016).



Above: Map of Fort St. George with partial fortifications in 1758 during the Third Carnatic War. Source: Major H.M. Vibart, *The Military History of the Madras Engineers and Pioneers: From 1743 up to the present time*, W.H. Allen & Co., London, 1881, p. 40.



Above: The above map shows the events from July to October 1767.

The combined armies of Mysore and the Nizam advanced as follows:- 1.) Kaveripattinam. 2.) Vaniyambadi. 3.) Changama. 4.) Thiruvannamalai. 5.) A cavalry detachment under Tipu Sultan was sent from Thiruvannamalai to raid Madras.

The joint forces of 1.) Colonel Smith and 2.) Lieutenant-Colonel Wood defeated the armies of Mysore and the Nizam in the battle of Thiruvannamalai and forced them to retreat.

Aftermath of the Battle

After the retreat from Thiruvannamalai, Haidar remained for two days at Changama and then re-crossed the Palar river which was now swollen after the recent rains and set up camp in a plain between Kaveripattinam and Vanyiambadi at a place called Calaimuttoor (erroneously called Coimbatore by Punganuri)³⁶⁶. It was here that Tipu joined him after his successful campaign. The Nizam had already established himself here and the two allies remained at this place for a month where they indulged in mutual recriminations. Nizam Ali Khan was full of indignation towards Haidar for the earlier fiasco but conveniently did not blame himself. He felt that there was little chance of him to acquire new territories in the Carnatic in the present situation and therefore he wanted to return to Hyderabad³⁶⁷. On the other hand, Haidar attributed the reverse suffered to the Nizam and his retinue and was beginning to wonder about the reliability of his ally. However after a few days of blaming each other they decided not to discuss the past and instead focus on the future³⁶⁸. Above all, the Nizam wanted to avoid precipitate action which would reflect badly on him and would perhaps encourage rebellions within his domains. He also decided to extract the maximum gains that could still be had.

The diplomatic game of niceties began again in full swing. After Tipu's return, the Nizam invited Haidar Ali and the prominent members of his court to wait on him at his durbar. This was mentioned in many of the sources like Wilks, Kirmani and Punganuri but once again De la Tour gave the best description of the events. After bestowing the highest honours on Haidar, the Nizam invited him to sit on a *masnad* or seat made of gold and covered with cushions of golden cloth and this was presented to him in the evening when the ceremony ended and he returned to his camp³⁶⁹. Similar honours were bestowed on Tipu, Faizullah Khan and others. After a few days Haidar invited the Hyderabad ruler to his camp where he was asked to sit on a seat made up of sacks filled with star pagodas made of silver as well as with gold mohurs which was covered with finely-made carpets and cushions of velvet embroidered with silver and which stood on a platform made of gold, all of which were presented to him at his departure³⁷⁰. The French writer also said that Haidar's mother visited him for two days during that time but this was not mentioned in other sources. After these

³⁶⁶ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 42; M.M.D.L.T., p. 206; Kirmani, p. 255; Punganuri, p. 17.

³⁶⁷ M.M.D.L.T., p. 204.

³⁶⁸ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 42.

³⁶⁹ M.M.D.L.T., p. 204.

³⁷⁰ Ibid, p. 205.

formalities, the diplomatic bargaining started in earnest. However, the allies suffered a setback at this juncture. Mahfuz Khan, the elder brother of Mohammad Ali, had been sent to the region around Dindigul to win over the Polygars over there. On October 2, he was captured near Madurai by the British commander Colonel Buck and was conveyed as a prisoner to his brother the Nawab of Arcot who kept him confined in Madras for the remainder of the war³⁷¹.

At the same time, the mood was buoyant in Madras. The string of victories had raised their confidence and they were now fixated on the overthrow of Haidar and the partition of the kingdom of Mysore, thus ruling out any chance of a compromise or a negotiated settlement. It is very probable that Haidar would have been receptive to peace feelers at this time as he now had an idea of the strength of the British troops. But now the Madras Council would not take a conciliatory line and prepared new plans against him. They tried to enlist the help of Madhava Rao and so explained their plans to the Maratha *vakil* in the city³⁷². The latter suggested sending an emissary directly to deal with the Peshwa. The Council decided to delegate this task to the Bombay government which was in the vicinity of the Marathas. Accordingly the Council wrote to Bombay to ask Madhava Rao to send 10,000 cavalry to Madras for the conquest of Mysore and also another detachment to coordinate with the Bombay Army for the conquest of Bidanur and the Malabar³⁷³. Mohammad Ali also sent his *vakil* to the Peshwa with a similar request. Though Bombay was not keen to go to war with Haidar as they benefited from the Malabar trade, they sent an emissary named Mostyn to negotiate with the court in Pune. Madhava Rao was equivocal in his commitments and it was felt that he could go either way and give his support either to Madras or to Haidar³⁷⁴. But Mostyn stayed on at Pune in order to report on developments.

Meanwhile, the monsoon was in full swing over the Carnatic. Fighting usually ceased in Indian battlefields during the rainy season due to the inherent difficulties involved. Colonel Smith also did not expect any fighting during this time and as a result had dispersed his troops into barracks in Kanchipuram, Wandiwash and Thiruchirappali and at the same time garrisoning the forts at Thiruvannamalai, Vaniyambadi, Ambur and others³⁷⁵. He was confident that after two successive defeats and with the rains, it would be a long time before

³⁷¹ Wilks, Vol II, p. 51.

³⁷² Letter from Madras to Bombay dated October 2, *M.M.S.P.*, range 251, vol. 59, published in Sheikh Ali, p. 90.

³⁷³ Board's minute on October 1, *M.M.S.P.*, published in Sheikh Ali, p. 91.

³⁷⁴ Letter from Bombay to Madras dated October 10, published in Sheikh Ali, p. 91.

³⁷⁵ *M.M.D.L.T.*, p. 204; Wilks, Vol II, p. 43.

the allied armies attacked again. But one of the characteristic traits of Haidar was to do the unexpected. That was the ability that had won him many victories. He had done it a year earlier during his campaign in the Malabar when he crushed the Nair rebellion by marching in the rains and protecting his men from disease and increasing their mobility by having them strip down to their underwear during the march just like their Nair opponents³⁷⁶. Through his intelligence network, he had learnt that the majority of the troops of the Madras Army were now in their cantonments and the forts along the frontier were weakly defended. So he felt that the time was ripe to strike and capture territory which would strengthen his position. In his discussions with the Nizam, Haidar outlined his plans to take Vaniyambadi and Ambur. During this campaign, the former would have to attack the British at Masulipatnam in order to divert their attention. It was agreed that after the capture of Ambur the Nizam could return to his domains while Haidar continued the war against the Nawab of Arcot and the Madras Army³⁷⁷. In the interim, the Nizam would hover around in the vicinity.

The Siege of Vaniyambadi

The Mysorean army set off on its fresh round of campaigning in the beginning of November. According to De la Tour, it was two days after Haidar's mother had departed with her retinue³⁷⁸. The main army marched towards Vaniyambadi while another detachment had been sent earlier in the direction of Tirupattur which had again fallen into British hands. The scouting parties of cavalry and infantry had reported an easy approach to Vaniyambadi along the course of the Palar river which flowed past the town and the route was covered with thick undergrowth and trees. Also there was no need of digging trenches for the artillery due to there being a ridge which could serve as a position for the cannons. The garrison there consisted of 30 Europeans with 1000 sepoys, mostly irregulars. The Mysorean army reached the outskirts of the fort at dusk on November 6 and set up a battery of 12 cannons on the ridge at night. The European commander of the artillery received a light wound in the process. Haidar ordered him to rest in his tent and took over the personal command of the battery. Throughout the night he sat under a tree nearby and directed the setting up of the artillery unmindful of the firing by the British who had now noticed his approach³⁷⁹. Though this is not mentioned in other sources it is certainly characteristic of Haidar's courage and he

³⁷⁶ M.M.D.L.T., p. 75.

³⁷⁷ Ibid, p. 205.

³⁷⁸ Ibid, p. 206.

³⁷⁹ Ibid, p. 207.

would repeat it during the siege of Ambur. He left when the commander returned. The cannons commenced firing soon after dawn on November 7 and soon the British garrison in Vaniyambadi capitulated, probably due to its inadequate strength though no breach had been made.

As usual, the negotiations and the events that followed are not elaborated in the accounts of Wilks and Wilson who simply said that the fort capitulated but De la Tour gave a more elaborate description. Lieutenant Robinson, the commander of the fort whom De la Tour identifies as “Lt. R----“, sent his second in command to discuss the terms of surrender. The junior officer, who is called “Mr. D----“ in the above account, met with the European commandant of Haidar’s artillery and demanded the same terms as had been offered after the siege of Kaveripattinam i.e. the soldiers would be given the right to go home with their personal belongings but leaving behind all arms, artillery and ammunition. The commandant agreed on the condition that the soldiers and officers who were being released would not fight against Haidar for the duration of a year. With these terms agreed to, the junior officer asked that Haidar’s seal be affixed on the agreement. As Haidar did not have his official seal, he used his signet ring to stamp the document and the British garrison marched off. The army of Mysore was able to seize 16 cannons and large quantities of rations from the fort³⁸⁰. Though these events are not mentioned by Wilks or Kirmani, they are confirmed by the memoirs of Punganuri who stated that Haidar Ali at Vaniyambadi “them he took prisoners, stripped them of their arms and let them go free.”³⁸¹ Meanwhile, Tirupattur had been captured by the Mysorean forces on November 5³⁸².

The Siege of Ambur

After placing his own troops in the fort of Vaniyambadi, Haidar set off for Ambur. At the same time, he sent renewed feelers for negotiations. Knowing that he could not directly communicate with the Madras government due to their hostile policies, he invited the official Stracey from Bombay with whom he had dealings earlier and who met him twice in November. Stracey sent a message to Madras that if the concerns of Haidar and the Nizam with regard to the Nawab of Arcot were addressed then the other matters would be easily

³⁸⁰ M.M.D.L.T., p. 208.

³⁸¹ Punganuri, op. cit., p. 17.

³⁸² Wilks, p. Vol II, 43.

settled³⁸³. However the Council was adamantly set upon Haidar's overthrow and even made plans to send secret messages to the Wodeyar Raja in Mysore to this effect. They decided to give an air of legitimacy to their dealings by claiming that Haidar was a usurper and the legitimate rulers i.e. the Wodeyars should be restored to power³⁸⁴. The East India Company was an expert at using the pretext of legitimacy in order to "buttress its own power and authority"³⁸⁵. However, the British efforts came to nothing as Haidar's effective intelligence system thwarted the communications. So there was very little possibility of a negotiated settlement and the hostilities continued. Haidar reached Ambur on November 10 and halted on the banks of the Palar across which lay the town. This was one of the most strongly defended places in the Carnatic and a major cantonment of the Madras Army. It consisted of three concentric fortifications; the first being the citadel situated at the top of a hill; below it on a level ground was an extensive walled area which contained the troops of Mohammad Ali commanded by Mukhlis Khan who was the nominal *killedar* of the fort; and finally at the base of the hill stood the town which was surrounded by a brick wall and this was where the British troops under Captain Calvert were stationed. The garrison was well supplied with artillery, small arms, ammunition as well as blankets, uniforms and rations³⁸⁶.

After camping outside the walls of the town, Haidar went on a reconnaissance mission to inspect the fortifications in spite of the heavy rain that prevailed. This nearly cost him his life; as he approached the bank of the river Palar he came directly opposite to some cannons within the fort which fired on him. The guns immediately opened up on him killing several men and horses but Haidar managed to emerge unscathed³⁸⁷. In spite of this, he continued to reconnoitre the defences and decided that it would be better to lay siege to the fort immediately from the northern direction as this would cut off reinforcements from Vellore and adjoining areas. Therefore, the Mysore army crossed the river the same night and set up camp outside the walls of the town notwithstanding the defensive fire. The storming of the ramparts from this side appeared feasible and so the rest of the night was spent in preparing ladders from bamboo stalks. It was decided to use the grenadiers and soldiers of the *avval* battalions as they were the best infantry troops in Haidar's army. When daylight came the

³⁸³ Letter from Strachey to the Madras Council dated November 10, *Military Consultations*, published in Sheikh Ali, p. 92.

³⁸⁴ Note: "This line of reasoning reached its pinnacle in the elaborate denunciations of Tipu Sultan of Mysore who 'violated the law and intercourse of nations' while at the same time destroying the basis of landed property under the 'ancient Hindoo constitution'". See C.A. Bayly, pp. 81-82.

³⁸⁵ Stern, *Company State*, p. 185.

³⁸⁶ M.M.D.L.T., p. 208.

³⁸⁷ Ibid, p. 209.

commanders surveyed the points of attack and then, after nightfall, advanced with their troops carrying ladders towards the walls of the town. They hid in the undergrowth near them, waiting for the signal to attack. Some cannons were also positioned in some deserted houses. All through the night the garrison inside the fort kept up the firing and even threw explosive bombs like fire pots and lit fuses. But Haidar's men did not lose their formations and order. De la Tour said that only one man was lost in the night but this is difficult to believe³⁸⁸. However, the formations remained intact and the attack was ready to begin.

At daybreak on November 13, the Mysore army advanced in good order towards the fort from several directions to the sound of drums along with their standards and ladders. They climbed into and out of the ditch outside the walls and then invested the ramparts of the town. Soon the bastions of the lower fort had fallen into the hands of the soldiers and then they proceeded to plunder the town. As they did so, several cannon shots from the upper fort and the citadel killed many of them. But they managed to get the gates open and Haidar, commanding the left wing of his cavalry, entered the town by crossing the ditch³⁸⁹. However, the troops spent most of the day in ransacking the town which enabled the British garrison to retreat and regroup. At nightfall, a British deserter informed Haidar that the Madras Army troops under Captain Calvert planned to retreat to the citadel in the darkness, after taking what they could carry and destroying the rest, and fight from there. The European commander immediately proposed to Haidar that the grenadiers, with all the Europeans in the lead, attack the British garrison immediately. This was agreed to and an hour was spent on frantic preparations for the attack. At 8 o' clock the detachment sallied forth across the streets of the town towards the British quarter and scaled the redoubts over there. The Madras troops retreated but 6 Europeans and 25 sepoys were taken prisoner. The Mysorean troops recovered a number of British uniforms which the retreating army had tried to incinerate, a number of cartridges which were dumped into the tank, 18 brass cannons, 3000 matchlocks, a large quantity of ammunition and ample supplies of grains³⁹⁰.

Wilks, in keeping with his practice of belittling Haidar, made no description of this battle and instead gave a single statement saying that the Mysore ruler so completely overran the lower fort that on November 15 Captain Calvert felt obliged to retreat to the citadel on the hilltop

³⁸⁸ M.M.D.L.T., p. 210.

³⁸⁹ Ibid, p. 211.

³⁹⁰ Ibid.

with a contingent of 500 sepoys, 1 officer, 1 sergeant and 15 Europeans³⁹¹. The commandant of the upper fort, Mukhlis Khan, refused to admit any troops except those of his own army into the lower fort. Calvert felt that he was in league with Haidar and so had him imprisoned along with his chief officers in the citadel. His soldiers were pressed into service as labourers to prepare for the upcoming siege. Calvert could have withstood the attack in the lower town itself which had ample stocks of arms and ammunition. Instead he chose to retreat to the citadel. It is probable that the escalating of the walls had taken him by surprise and hence he was obliged to retreat. Haidar set up his cannons around the citadel and commenced to bombard it. However, these guns were not designed to fire at an elevation and there were no mortars in his army. However, he stuck to bombarding the citadel with these unsuitable pieces of artillery by placing them along the slopes for the next three weeks. The result was that he lost many of his gunners and artillery officers as the British gunners could easily pick up targets from their vantage point³⁹². One of these victims was his friend Khaki Shah who was killed by a cannonball ricocheting off the slope of the hill³⁹³. Even after 17 days of bombardment, the citadel was no closer to falling. A breach had been made but it was in an inaccessible position. Haidar sent one of his men under a flag of truce proposing to Captain Calvert a large reward if the latter abandoned the position and agreed to serve in the Mysore army. Calvert replied that the next messenger who bore such an offer would be hanged and his body would be displayed in the breach³⁹⁴. And so the siege continued with Haidar trying to smoke the garrison out of the citadel.

Meanwhile, the Council of Madras had been mobilising its troops from the barracks ever since it received news of Haidar's new movements. Lieutenant-Colonel Wood's detachment stationed at Thiruchirappali was ordered to proceed to Thiruvannamalai and then cross the pass at Changama into the territory of Baramahal. The main army under Colonel Smith was assembled at Vellore by November 15 and was ordered to march to the relief of Ambur³⁹⁵. It would take at least two weeks for the British army and its cumbersome train to march across the hilly country and reach its destination. News of this relief army reached Haidar in Ambur. Some French commanders advised him to immediately attack it before it effected a junction with the besieged garrison. They also suggested an attack on Vellore itself which would have

³⁹¹ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 43.

³⁹² M.M.D.L.T., p. 213.

³⁹³ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 47.

³⁹⁴ Ibid, p. 45.

³⁹⁵ Ibid, p. 48.

the effect of demoralising the British as it was their local cantonment and they would be forced to retreat to defend it³⁹⁶. This was sound military advice as the Madras Army would be stretched out during the transit and thus would be an easy prey for the Mysore cavalry. But the Mysore ruler remained adamant on seeing through the siege of Ambur first. With its strategic location, it was a very important fort and thus was one that Haidar coveted, and he had said as much to the Nizam. Also, reducing the citadel had become an issue of prestige for him and he was determined to follow through on it. But in doing so he again missed the opportunity of cutting off the junction of his enemies as was the case earlier between Smith and Wood in Thiruvannamalai. This reflects poorly on Haidar's strategic thinking and his ability to see the bigger picture.

While the fruitless siege dragged on, Smith completed his preparations and marched towards Ambur and arrived in the vicinity of the Mysore army on December 6. Haidar seemed to lose his nerve on the approach of the British commander. He had twice tried to defeat Smith and both times had to taste stinging defeats. So, he was not keen on meeting him again in the open. Also, much of his gunpowder and shot had been expended during the three-week siege. He decided to withdraw to a more secure location to anticipate his foe in case of a battle. His irregular levies were used to engage the defenders of the citadel in skirmishes. They climbed the slopes of the hill and fired on Calvert's troops with their matchlocks and then immediately retreated to begin the cycle again³⁹⁷. This was done in order to divert the garrison's attention while Haidar withdrew his regular troops and his cannons, a task with which was completed by midnight. Then, under the cover of the moonlight, Haidar withdrew his army from Ambur to a camp on the route to Vaniyambadi. After resting through the night the army resumed its march the next day and reached its destination where it took up a defensive position on the bank of the Palar with its right flank resting against the fort and the whole host facing towards Ambur, the most likely direction of the British advance³⁹⁸.

Smith reached the fortress of Ambur on the morning of December 7 and rejoiced to see the Union Jack still flying over the citadel. He warmly commended Captain Calvert for his defence of the fort; and later the Madras government honoured the captain for his gallantry³⁹⁹. De la Tour said that Smith had with him an army of 28,000 men with 5,000

³⁹⁶ M.M.D.L.T., p. 212.

³⁹⁷ Ibid, pp. 213-214.

³⁹⁸ Ibid, p. 212.

³⁹⁹ Wilson, p. 251.

Europeans, and among them were reinforcements sent from Bengal which seems to be an exaggeration. But it was certainly large having received reinforcements from Madras and comprised of several thousand sepoy and at least 1000 Europeans⁴⁰⁰. The Colonel allowed his troops to rest during the day in the fort but resumed his pursuit of the Mysore army at dusk⁴⁰¹. Haidar had sent his main cavalry forces across the river along with his artillery and baggage and as a result did not post cavalry scouts near the fort. Two redoubts, raised on high ledges around 100 paces from the camp, having two light cannons each, served as the sentinels for the army⁴⁰².

Aftermath of the Siege

On the morning of December 8 at around 7 o' clock the sentinels sighted Smith's army on the march and fired the cannons alerting the camp⁴⁰³. Haidar immediately struck camp and assumed command of the cavalry detachments still on the banks of the river. He ordered the infantry to assume battle formation and sent the baggage and the cannons across the water to be sent immediately to Kaveripattinam. He also ordered his main cavalry detachment under Makhdoom Ali to cross the river and join him. With his brother-in-law Makhdoom, he advanced as far as the redoubts where he observed his opponent's army. The British troops were coming in three successive lines of infantry with the cavalry bringing up the rear except for about 200 dragoons who formed the advance guard⁴⁰⁴. It is clear from his dispositions that Haidar had no intention to fight the British but was desirous of making a rearguard action enabling his main army to evacuate to Kaveripattinam. He probably intended to use his cavalry to harass the opposing army. This is made clear by his next action. He went across the river to supervise the evacuation of his army leaving Makhdoom and the European cavalry officers to observe Smith's contingent. Suddenly, the European horsemen under their commander Aumont, about 80 in number, rode forward as if to attack the British. But then, to Makhdoom's amazement, they were welcomed by the British troops. The whole European cavalry contingent in Haidar's army had deserted *en masse* to the opposing side as the result of a secret understanding between the two commanders⁴⁰⁵. When Makhdoom saw this defection, he rejoined Haidar across the river and the whole entourage set off for

⁴⁰⁰ Wilson, p. 252; Wilks, Vol. II, pp. 47-48.

⁴⁰¹ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 48.

⁴⁰² Ibid.

⁴⁰³ M.M.D.L.T., p. 215.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid, p. 217; Wilks, Vol. II, p. 49.

Kaveripattinam. Smith did not pursue the retreating army as he was involved in welcoming the French deserters into his camp and also he lacked adequate cavalry to chase them.

Friction between the mercenaries and their patrons was nothing new. Often they would desert suddenly if they were dissatisfied or were offered higher pay by the opposing side. Already there was resentment between Haidar and his French cavalry. Earlier in October 1767 when the army had camped at Calaimuttoor the latter had demanded their pay in silver rupees instead of gold pagodas⁴⁰⁶. This was advantageous to them as it would mean an increase of 5 shillings at the prevailing exchange rate. Haidar reproached them, saying that they had been found wanting in battle and therefore were not deserving of an increased rate. This resulted in a near-mutiny and the European cavalry went in a bloc to offer their services to Ramachandra, a Polygar nearby. Haidar sent the French commander of his grenadiers with his infantry to bring them back. Not wanting to offend Haidar, Ramachandra sent the European cavalry back who made no resistance in the face of the armament of the grenadiers. Haidar had them punished by tying them to poles in full public view and leaving them there for a few days. But then he took them back into his service⁴⁰⁷. This was again an imprudent move on his part. Exemplary punishment of the deserters would have served to deter further instances of treachery and insubordination among his ranks. But Haidar always valued Europeans in his service and took them on regardless of their track record. This again shows his short-sightedness which ultimately resulted in the French cavalry deserting in a body to the British.

Smith now occupied the evacuated fort of Vaniyambadi on December 8. His supply situation was precarious as he had conducted forced marches in order to relieve Ambur. He returned to that town to wait for the supply train and deputed Colonel Tod with the advance guard to follow Haidar and, if possible, intercept him. Tod marched as far as Tirupattur, which he found abandoned, but managed to recover some grain and cattle left behind⁴⁰⁸. Meanwhile, the armies of Haidar and the Nizam retreated to Kaveripattinam. For the next two weeks, the allies made no move and took stock of the situation. Here they missed another opportunity to deal a blow to Madras army when Colonel Wood again reinforced Smith at Ambur without enduring any harassment along the way. After capturing Kaveripattinam in August Haidar had asked a French engineer to improve its defences. The engineer apparently had done a

⁴⁰⁶ M.M.D.L.T., p. 223.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁸ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 49.

good job. The northern part of the town had been strengthened with a good covered way and redoubts had been built to cover all the cardinal points along with observation posts set up on rocky outcrops to survey the points of approach, especially from the south⁴⁰⁹. To the rear of the fort was the river which would have made an approach difficult; but the fort was provided with boats in case of the necessity to cross the river to reach Krishnagiri. Well-supplied with rations as well as arms and ammunition, Kaveripattinam was a redoubtable stronghold.

The Second Battle of Kaveripattinam

When Smith arrived with his augmented troops to Kaveripattinam in the second week of December, he surveyed the defensive works and decided against a direct attack as that would have been too costly. He set up camp in the vicinity and kept a watch on his opponents. Meanwhile, Haidar was smarting under a series of defeats which had dented his credibility as a military commander. Instead of attacking Smith's troops directly, he decided on the traditional light cavalry tactics. He ordered his cavalry troops to make regular sorties against the British troops and also attack their baggage trains⁴¹⁰. Also, from December 14 onwards, he sent his heavy artillery and baggage as well as his son Tipu and friend Ghazi Khan back to Krishnagiri with a small escort. On December 18, the Nizam set off for Kadapa leaving Rukh-ud-daulah in charge of his artillery and cavalry to continue the campaign. But it was Haidar's cavalry which had to provide him an escort of around 1000 horses⁴¹¹. At this stage, Haidar's plan seems to have been to maintain a defensive position in the fort while continuously harass his opponents with the cavalry so that they would either have to withdraw or attack him in his strong position and sustain heavy casualties.

The situation remained static for the next week as Haidar sent his light cavalry to attack the British foraging parties and their supply trains. The strain was beginning to tell on Smith's troops as he had to guard almost every detachment that ventured out for any task. Suddenly a new opportunity arose when Haidar received information of a large supply convoy under Captain Fitzgerald arriving to join Smith. He thought of attacking this baggage train which generally moved slowly due to the limited number of pack animals available and hence would be an easier target for the Mysore cavalry. Therefore, he decided to intercept the convoy with a strong detachment consisting of, according to Wilks, around 4000 cavalry and 2000 infantry along with 5 cannons under his personal command on the morning of

⁴⁰⁹ Wilks, Vol. II, pp. 49-50.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid, pp. 50-51.

⁴¹¹ Ibid.

December 25⁴¹². This seems an exaggeration but the force definitely must have been large. But Smith had knowledge of Haidar's target, whether through an informer or through intuition is not known, and immediately detached a force of two grenadier companies, two battalions of sepoy, two field guns and five hundred horsemen to reinforce the convoy. This force was under the command of Major Fitzgerald (not to be confused with Captain Fitzgerald who was leading the convoy) and it reached its destination without Haidar knowing about it. It was a major intelligence failure on Haidar's part that he did not know that his target had been reinforced.

The upcoming battle was been mentioned by De la Tour and Kirmani painted it as a great victory for Haidar; but confirmation of the actual turn of events is found in Punganuri who mentioned that Haidar unsuccessfully attacked a British supply train with a cavalry force and was forced to retreat⁴¹³. This is not unusual as they are reluctant to shed light on the defeats suffered by their patron. But, surprisingly even Wilks also made only a brief description of the battle, mainly deprecating Haidar; and the most elaborate description is given in Wilson who includes Major Fitzgerald's report to the Madras Council. Haidar and his cavalry troops attacked the convoy at around 5 o' clock on the evening of December 29 with "more resolution than I ever saw his men show on any other occasion."⁴¹⁴ The attack was so serious that the commander became alarmed about the fate of the supplies in the convoy. He immediately arranged his troops in a defensive array and stored his vital cargo in a mud fort nearby in the charge of a European sergeant and the Nawab of Arcot's infantry. Haidar made several resolute cavalry charges on the British lines but was beaten back each time with the loss of many men. The two 6-pounder field guns possessed by Fitzgerald's detachment proved decisive. The artillerymen loaded the cannons with grapeshot which they fired on the attacking forces and caused havoc among them⁴¹⁵. Wilks said that in one such sally Haidar's horse was shot from under him and so was the turban from his head⁴¹⁶. But this is not confirmed by any other source, both British and non-British. By nightfall the Mysore ruler had realised that the battle was lost and he retreated precipitately back to the fort.

This battle which took place near Kaveripattinam was the third pitched battle Haidar had personally fought against the Madras Army and in each of them he had been defeated with

⁴¹² Wilks, Vol. II, p. 51.

⁴¹³ Punganuri, p. 17.

⁴¹⁴ Letter by Fitzgerald to the Madras Council dated December 30, published in Wilson, p. 253.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid.

⁴¹⁶ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 52.

heavy losses. His tactics in this event were also found wanting. He chose to make fruitless cavalry charges against a strongly defended position while a better strategy would have been to send his cavalry against the mud fort where the supplies were stored which was lying virtually undefended. It is curious that an experienced military general like Haidar would commit this folly even after repeated setbacks. Wilks said that Haidar wanted to salvage his military reputation after a series of setbacks such as the retreat from Ambur and the desertion of the European cavalry contingent. This is not inconceivable as Haidar felt that the recent defeats and defections had dented his credibility and prestige and he wanted a victory to restore them and probably that is why he personally led the charge. But a more logical reason was that he assumed that the baggage train was lightly defended and was unaware of it being reinforced by Fitzgerald's detachment. It was highly unlikely that he would have attacked it if he knew that cannons were guarding them. It is also probable that Haidar was unaware that the supplies were kept in a mud fort under a minimal guard which would have been a tempting target. This indicates a major intelligence failure on the part of the Mysore ruler as he had been on the road for nearly five days before attacking but had been unaware of the changed circumstances and the increased number of troops opposing him.

After this defeat, Haidar felt that his position in Kaveripattinam was untenable. This clearly was not so as Smith had reservations about attacking the fort. But the Mysore ruler had lost his nerve and made preparations for crossing the Javadi hills to go back to Mysore territory. Also he had received reports that the British were going to make incursions in the Malabar⁴¹⁷. He left a strong force, mainly cavalry, under Makhdoom Ali to act as a rearguard and keep the British from following him. But there was little danger of this as the British couldn't pursue him without seriously extending their supply lines; and they also could not do so with their inadequate transport. Indeed, after the battle near Kaveripattinam Smith had made no forward movement as he was involved in replenishing the supplies of his army. Haidar started his withdrawal in the first week of January; and the route he followed is given in the memoirs of Punganuri. Haidar first retreated to Tenkaraikottai and then to the fort of Dharmapuri which he garrisoned with 1200 soldiers and then went through the pass of Huliurdurga to reach Bangalore⁴¹⁸. By the end of the first week of January 1768, he had completely evacuated the Carnatic-Payanghat. During this period, Colonel Smith's only military act had been to take possession of Kaveripattinam which had been abandoned by

⁴¹⁷ Fortescue, p. 122.

⁴¹⁸ Punganuri, pp. 17-18.

Makhdoom soon after Haidar's withdrawal. But soon the supply situation worsened and finally, after going for two days without rations, he was forced to retreat towards Ambur and await fresh developments there.

The War in the Nizam's Territories

The Council of Madras had already written to Calcutta for assistance during the initial invasion in August and had been promised support in both funds and in men as even the Bengal government was keen on British territorial expansion. Accordingly, in September three sepoy battalions of the Bengal Army followed by artillery and a company of European infantry in sequence had sailed to the Northern Circars in order to secure the East India Company's latest acquisition from the hostile designs of the Nizam⁴¹⁹. These locations were a strategic link between Bengal and Madras and therefore of prime importance for the Bengal government. Another detachment of 1700 troops under Captain Achmuty had been sent to Madras as reinforcements and it had arrived in October and had participated in the fighting against the allied troops. Still other detachments landed in Masulipatnam and Kondapalli throughout the last months of 1767, and these took the fighting to the Nizam's territories. A force under Lieutenant-Colonel Hart comprising of troops from both the Bengal and the Madras armies marched to Khammam which surrendered in December⁴²⁰. Wilks said that this was the exploit of Lt. Col. Peach but Wilson was more likely to be correct as he had greater access to the records of the Bengal Army in Calcutta. The threat to his territories was another reason for the Nizam's withdrawal from the Carnatic-Payanghat who decided to rush home to look after his affairs.

Aftermath

Thus ended the eventful first year of the Anglo-Mysore war of 1767-1769. Haidar had mixed fortunes during this period. In the first half of the year, he had been able to make the Marathas withdraw from his kingdom and still had managed to keep most of his kingdom intact but he had had to leave several territories like the Malabar and Dindigul undefended as he had had to withdraw his troops in order to defend his core territories. In the next half, he had managed to detach the Nizam from the hostile alliance and in turn ally with him. But the Hyderabad ruler had been more of a liability than an asset. The allied armies had initially made impressive gains against the British and the Nawab of Arcot by conquering territory as

⁴¹⁹ Wilson, p. 253.




⁴²⁰ Ibid.

far as Thiruvannamalai. But soon the tide had turned and the gains had been lost to the advancing Madras Army. Both the allies had been forced to retreat to their own domains but Haidar had the satisfaction of knowing that he still controlled the key passes to the Carnatic-Payanghat like Krishnagiri and Venkatadampatti. But most worrisome to him was that his vaunted French-trained troops had failed to deliver on the field of battle. As he would need time to regroup and rethink his strategy, he refrained from conducting hostilities immediately. The Nizam had failed in his mission of territorial aggrandizement and the Madras Army had been unable to capture territory outside the Presidency. Even the Marathas under Peshwa Madhava Rao had been able to make limited gains as their policy was not to hold territory. On the whole, the balance sheet read the same for each side in the conflict i.e. there were few gains for each party but no serious losses. Thus it was evident that none of the parties in the conflict held a decisive advantage over any of the others.

Colonel Joseph Smith's victories and Haidar's withdrawal from the Carnatic-Payanghat had a profound political effect on the Council of Madras. It strengthened their resolution to topple Haidar and annex the Mysore territories. They certainly had reason to be optimistic. The Madras Army had been victorious over the Indian powers in every major battle so far. They also had hopes of detaching the Nizam from the alliance thus leaving Haidar isolated both politically and militarily. An added reason was that both the Bengal and the Bombay governments had now agreed to join the war. The Bengal Army troops had already arrived in Madras and some of the detachments were waging war. The Bombay government also promised to open hostilities along the western coast and had mobilised its army for that purpose. Also, Murari Rao Ghorpade arrived in Madras in January with a contingent of 2500 cavalry and 3000 infantry⁴²¹. This bolstered the Madras Army as it would not have to rely solely on Mohammad Ali for cavalry support. Thus the Madras government felt justified in its policy of continuing the war and expanding it into the Mysore territories. The roles of the warring parties in previous six months were effectively reversed; Haidar had gone from being on the offensive to the defensive while with the Madras government it was vice-versa. Thus the stage was set for the next phase of the war.

⁴²¹ M.M.D.L.T., p. 229.



 British Army	 Mysore Army	 Nizam's Army
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Above: The map shows the events from November to December 1767.

The allied armies of Mysore and the Nizam retreated from Thiruvannamalai to 1.) Vaniyambadi and Ambur 2.) Kaveripattinam 3.) Across the passes of Carnatic 4.) To Mysore and the Nizam's domains respectively.

The British army advanced to meet the opposing forces at 1.) Ambur and Vaniyambadi 2.) Kaveripattinam. 3.) Vellore in order to resupply and rest itself.

Chapter IV

THE MIDDLE PHASE OF THE WAR: DIPLOMATIC INITIATIVES, THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE NIZAM AND THE RENEWED BRITISH OFFENSIVE AGAINST MYSORE

Three successive victories in the Carnatic-Payanghat had boosted the morale of the Council of Madras. It now felt that deposing Haidar Ali was not only possible but that it was very desirable also as it would remove an ambitious ruler who was a potential threat from the political scenario. They decided that it should be done with the minimum possible cost to the Madras government, both politically and in terms of resources. This required the use of an Indian ruler as a figurehead so that the political blame would be deflected from the East India Company. The closest Indian ally of the British in South India was the Nawab of Arcot Mohammad Ali who relied on the Madras government for financial and military support. It was decided that the upcoming conquests in the Mysore territories would be in the name of the Nawab; and he would have to accompany the Madras Army and pay its expenses. The Council was sure that it would conquer Mysore and it further stated that Mohammad Ali's son Moin-ul-Mulk would be the new ruler of the conquered territories while the East India Company would annex Bangalore and Srirangapatna⁴²². This was again a short-sighted move by the Madras government. In the war so far, Mohammad Ali had proved to be unreliable in giving military or financial support to the extent that he could not even provide logistics for the Madras Army. It was unrealistic to have expectations of him in the future. But, as events showed, the immediate hostilities took place on the eastern coast.

The Offensive against the Nizam's territories

In the beginning of 1768, the Madras government decided to focus its attention on Nizam Ali Khan's territories. The reasoning behind this was two-fold. Firstly, it was aware that the Nizam was militarily the weakest of the parties in the conflict. Hence to move against him would not cost too much in time or resources. Secondly, the Nizam still commanded great prestige as the Mughal Subedar in the Deccan. If he was made to withdraw from the conflict then Haidar would be politically isolated and thus easier to deal with. Already the Northern Circars and Khammam had been secured by December 1767. The offensive against the Hyderabad territories began in earnest in early 1768 and the responsibility for its conduct was

⁴²² Board's minute dated December 16, *M.M.S.P.*, published in Sheikh Ali, p. 94.

given to the Bengal Army. Accordingly, Lieutenant-Colonel Joseph Peach landed in Masulipatnam on January 8, 1768, and took charge of the operations in that theatre⁴²³. After securing the Circars, he advanced inland and by the 20th of the month had captured Warangal, which was abandoned on his approach, and seemed to be proceeding to Hyderabad which lay undefended as the Nizam had not yet reached the city⁴²⁴. Needless to say, the Nizam was greatly alarmed at these developments. Even during the withdrawal from the Carnatic, Nizam Ali Khan had opened secret communications with Colonel Smith who demanded that he detach himself from Haidar and, if possible, deliver the latter to the British⁴²⁵. The former hedged the issue by saying that it would be done after he quit the Carnatic⁴²⁶. As usual he seems to have been dilly-dallying to see how events would turn out.

Diplomatic Initiatives

The Nizam was finally running out of options with the Bengal Army advancing towards his capital Hyderabad. Haidar also seemed to be in no mood to entertain his supposed ally and had stopped the payment of subsidies which proved ruinous to the latter. So he had no choice but to make peace with the Madras government. To this end, he had completely withdrawn his contingent including his *Diwan* Rukn-ud-daulah from Haidar Ali's forces by early January 1768⁴²⁷. In order to save face, the Hyderabad ruler wanted it to appear that it was the Madras Army that was suing for peace. To this end, he invited Colonel Smith to visit his camp which was located near the entrance of the Damalachervu pass nearly 200 km north of Madras several times. But Smith declined to do so apparently suspecting treachery. After a lot of persuasion and pleading on the part of the Nizam and his ministers, Smith sent Major Fitzgerald to the camp to negotiate terms and it was decided the latter would accompany a delegation of ministers to Madras⁴²⁸. But, flush with victory, the Council was in no mood to oblige the Nizam and appear to be weak with respect to an Indian potentate. They sent unequivocal instructions that the *Diwan* Rukh-ud-daulah would have to visit Madras to discuss terms so that "it might be known to all the country powers that it was they, and not us, suing for peace."⁴²⁹ They further threatened that if this failed to happen then the Madras Army would march all the way to Hyderabad. To buttress this threat, they ordered Smith to

⁴²³ Wilson, *History of the Madras Army*, p. 254.

⁴²⁴ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 52; Wilson, p. 254; Sheikh Ali, p. 97.

⁴²⁵ Sheikh Ali, p. 96.

⁴²⁶ Ibid.

⁴²⁷ Ibid, p. 97; Wilks, Vol. II, p. 54; Wilson, p. 254.

⁴²⁸ Letter from Fitzgerald to Madras dated January 29, *M.M.S.P.*, pub. in Sheikh Ali, p. 97; Wilks, Vol. II, p. 54.

⁴²⁹ Instructions from Madras to Fitzgerald dated January 30, *M.M.S.P.*, pub. in Sheikh Ali, p. 98.

move towards Punganur where the Nizam was currently camped. With this new development, Nizam Ali Khan had no choice but to comply.

On February 9, Rukn-ud-daulah arrived in Madras; but such was the disorganization in his retinue that he had not brought with him the necessary credentials from his ruler⁴³⁰. The Madras government refused to treat with him without the proof of authority. The letters finally arrived on February 15 and negotiations started in earnest. It was finally agreed by February 23 that:-

1. The Northern Circars would remain in the hands of the British, thus strengthening their hold on the coast, and an annual rent of 5 lakhs of rupees was to be paid by the East India Company to the Nizam for them.
2. Initially 32 lakhs of rupees would be deducted at an annual rate of 3 lakhs as payment for the expenses of the war⁴³¹.
3. The Nizam's brother Basalat Jung would retain Guntur as his *jagir* while the British would annex Chicacole and Kondapalli without any payment of tribute.
4. With regard to Mysore, the Nizam agreed to sever all ties with Haidar and declare him as a usurper. He also agreed to hand over *Diwani* rights over Mysore to the British after the expected conquest in return for an annual tribute of 7 lakhs and confirmed the whole of the Carnatic-Payanghat as the *jagir* of Mohammad Ali (although he had only nominal authority over this vast stretch of territory).

The treaty was signed in Madras on February 26 and was finally ratified by the Nizam on March 13 with the Maratha *vakil* also signing on the document⁴³². Consequently, the Madras Army returned immediately while the Bengal Army withdrew in April. This effectively ended the role of the Nizam for the duration of the war. In a sense, he got off remarkably lightly. The only territorial losses he had suffered were the Northern Circars which in any case had already been promised to the British by the treaty with the Mughal emperor. The losses in terms of money and prestige were very real indeed but he still could look forward to payment from the East India Company in the future⁴³³. This seems to have been a calculated move on the part of the Madras government. The main adversary was Haidar and the prestige of the Nizam would be useful in legitimizing their cause. Also claiming other territories or

⁴³⁰ Board's Minute dated February 9, *M.M.S.P.*, pub. in Sheikh Ali, p. 98; Wilson, *History*, p. 254.

⁴³¹ Wilson, p. 254; Sheikh Ali, p. 98.

⁴³² Aitchison, pp. 21-28; Sheikh Ali, pp. 98-99; Wilks, Vol. II, p. 55; For the text of the treaty, see Appendix.

⁴³³ E.H. Nolan, *An Illustrated History of the British Empire in India and the East: From the Earliest Times to the Suppression of the Sepoy Mutiny in 1859*, Virtue & Co., London, 1859, p. 318.

tributes from the Nizam would needlessly involve the government into disputes with the Mughal court as the Nizam was the Subedar of the Deccan. In the treaty, Haidar was referred to as “Haidur Naik” which referred to his humble origins and was indicative of the contempt he was held in by the British and their unwillingness to accept his position⁴³⁴.

Also in January 1768, Haidar felt the necessity of terminating hostilities and therefore sent the priests he had captured from Santhome with peace overtures to Smith who was in Vellore. Smith accordingly forwarded the messages to the Council of Madras, also giving his personal opinion that they should be accepted as it would save the Madras Army from further expending the scarce resources by campaigning in the difficult territory of the Carnatic-Balaghat. But the Madras government wasn't ready to oblige; and Haidar, sensing the mood in Fort St. George, did not send renewed feelers⁴³⁵. He was also facing trouble along the Malabar Coast. The Nairs had again risen against the Mysoreans and the Mapillas and had raided several of their blockhouses (makeshift forts) in the northern Malabar. They received support from the Bombay government and were further aided by the withdrawal of the bulk of Haidar's troops from the region in order to fight the war against the British⁴³⁶. With his hands full, the Mysore ruler was in no position to help his vassal the Mapilla Ali Raja in crushing the rebellion. But soon a greater threat appeared on the horizon.

The capture of Mangalore

The Bombay government had by now fitted out its fleet and mobilised its army. The expedition was described by Charles Rathbone Low in his *History of the Indian Navy* (1877). A detachment 400 Europeans and 800 sepoy of the Bombay Army under Major John Gouin had landed on the western coast near Honnavar on February 19 and advanced inland⁴³⁷. The city of Mangalore was held by a garrison under Latif Ali Baig. This port city (written in Mysorean sources as Kodiyal Bandar, the name given to it after its acquisition in 1763)⁴³⁸ was of strategic importance to Mysore. It was the chief port of the kingdom where all the principal imports and exports took place; and Haidar's fleet was stationed there. Also, the Bombay Army could advance inland and then through the Western Ghats to reach Bidanur where a lot of treasure was still kept. Haidar knew that he would have to stem the advance

⁴³⁴ W.H. Davenport Adams, *The Makers of British India*, John Hogg, London, 1894, p. 94.

⁴³⁵ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 54; M.M.D.L.T., p. 229.

⁴³⁶ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 58.

⁴³⁷ C.R. Low, *History of the Indian Navy*, p. 153; Letter to Gouin, *Orme Manuscripts*, vol. 86, p. 11, pub. in Sheikh Ali, p. 104.

⁴³⁸ Kirmani, p. 267; Punganuri, p. 18.

and so decided to send a cavalry detachment under Tipu Sultan to reinforce the garrison in Mangalore. Tipu left with a select force of 3000 light cavalry on January 20⁴³⁹. Meanwhile, Latif Ali planned to attack the British at Honnavar and accordingly left with his army to meet them on the open ground, leaving behind a small force to defend the fort at Mangalore. But the British movement towards Honnavar had only been a feint to draw Latif Ali out of his stronghold. As the Mysore general advanced to meet the Bombay Army, it circled around the Mysorean troops and made straight for Mangalore which was weakly defended due to the troops being with Latif Ali; and the city surrendered in early February⁴⁴⁰. Latif Ali Beg and his contingent of soldiers were forced to withdraw to other forts in the area such as Mirjan and Bekal, but they kept raiding the British patrols in the vicinity.

The immediate consequence of the surrender was that the admiral in charge of Haidar's navy, an Englishman named Stannet, surrendered his entire fleet at Mangalore and Honnavar to the British. This small flotilla consisted of 2 large sailing ships with masts, 2 two-masted ghurabs and 10 gallivats⁴⁴¹. Stannet and the ships were sent to Bombay. De la Tour tried to put a spin on these events saying that the fleet was at Goa and thus was not captured. But it was clear that Haidar's entire navy had surrendered to the British without a shot being fired. This was again proof of the unreliability of the mercenaries that the Mysore ruler had in his employ. The British troops captured Basavaraja Durga as well as numerous other fortified locations in the region. But the Bombay Army was too small to advance inland and reinforcements were not forthcoming. Hence, it concentrated its forces on Mangalore in order to consolidate the gains and erect a strong defensive position. Meanwhile, Tipu had reached the coast and had joined the army of Latif Ali with his contingent. After serving in many battles against the British, Tipu knew of the effectiveness of their arms and tactics. Also, the Mysorean forces lacked artillery to lay siege to the city of Mangalore. Hence, the two commanders decided to jointly raid isolated British parties in the surrounding countryside with their cavalry and also harass them in the city by cutting off its sources of food and communications⁴⁴². This was effectively done for the next few months as the invading forces lacked cavalry to chase the Mysore horsemen and certainly could not do it on foot. The British troops were defeated by the Mysore army at Mirjan (erroneously called Miraj in the British records) in April⁴⁴³.

⁴³⁹ Wilks, p. 58; Punganuri, p. 18; Kirmani, p. 267; M.M.D.L.T., p. 230.

⁴⁴⁰ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 58.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid; C.R. Low, p. 153.

⁴⁴² Wilks, Vol. II, p. 59.

⁴⁴³ Letter to Gouin on April 18, *Orme Manuscripts*, pub. in Sheikh Ali, p. 104.

Consequently, the Bombay Army could only communicate through the sea routes indicating that an effective blockade had taken place. Meanwhile, Tipu and Latif Ali waited for reinforcements to arrive.

The renewed British Offensive against Mysore

It is clear from the lenient terms granted to the Nizam and the pressure on him to declare Haidar as a rebel and a usurper that the Madras government now intended to throw its full weight against Mysore and subdue him. This is evident during a meeting of the Council in January where it was stated, “As Hyder Ally (sic) is the life of all opposition and his fall may pave the way to easy accomplishment of our views with regard to the Mysore country, it is against him, and where he is, our greatest efforts must be exerted.”⁴⁴⁴ The government now drew up a plan of action even as the negotiations between the Nizam were going on. The Madras Army would be divided into two forces which would approach Mysore from different directions. Colonel Smith was to attack from the east with his detachment of 600 Europeans and 5000 sepoys along with 12 field guns, while Lieutenant Colonel Wood would approach from the south with 500 Europeans, 4000 sepoys and 10 field guns (The historian J.W. Fortescue gave a figure of 1500 Europeans and 7500 sepoys under Smith and 600 Europeans and 4440 sepoys under Wood but the version in the Board’s minute is likely to be more correct)⁴⁴⁵. The armies would be under the overall command of Smith who was appointed as Commander-in-Chief⁴⁴⁶. The Council was so sure of its victory that it appointed a committee of three members designated Field Deputies to oversee the campaign. It consisted of the commander Colonel Smith as well as two members of the Council viz. Colonel John Call and a civilian named Mackay. Call and Mackay were to serve as liaison officers between Fort St. George and the Madras Army on the field. The purpose of the Field Deputies was to go along with the army, direct its field operations, procure the necessary supplies and manage the conquests for the Nawab of Arcot (the campaign was in the name of Mohammad Ali)⁴⁴⁷. But this still did not address the basic question of the lack of transport and cavalry to adequately prosecute the campaign in a far flung area. Also there was the danger of a split command which might prove detrimental to the efficiency of an army as both Call and Mackay had little recent experience on the field of battle.

⁴⁴⁴ Board’s minute on January 18, 1768, *M.M.S.P.*, pub. in Sheikh Ali, p. 102.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 101; Fortescue, p. 124.

⁴⁴⁶ Board’s minute on January 18, 1768, *M.M.S.P.*, pub. in Sheikh Ali, p. 101.

⁴⁴⁷ Sheikh Ali, p. 100.

There was friction between Smith and the Council from the start. The Council was of the opinion that Haidar's forts along the south and the east should be captured one by one with a final advance on Bangalore. If that fort was captured, then the Madras Army was to proceed to Srirangapatna and depose Haidar. Smith disapproved of a direct attack on Mysore territory from the east and instead in his correspondence advocated the advance of a unified force from the south across the direction of Vaniyambadi where the land was fertile and hence the army could be easily supplied. This force would advance on Bangalore and defeat Haidar. Also, he pressed for maximum speed with minimum stopping points for the army and hence to directly attack the important forts of Mysore. But the Council overruled him and said that the capture of lesser forts would demoralise Haidar and would lead to his early capitulation⁴⁴⁸. The members were particularly keen that the strategic passes in the junction of the Eastern and Western Ghats remain in British hands. This shows that the Madras government was more determined on territorial aggrandizement than just on the deposition of Haidar. But the realisation had not dawned on them that the army they sent was too small to make the conquests of large tracts of land and it was not equipped with siege cannon which would be necessary to take important forts. Also the division of the army into two forces would further reduce coordination between the commanders.

After refitting and receiving their orders, the two armies set out on their missions in early February and the Field Deputies left Madras on April 5 to join their respective detachments⁴⁴⁹. Smith again resumed his march towards Kaveripattinam from which he had withdrawn in January and the defenders of the fort fled under the cover of darkness on February 28 at his approach⁴⁵⁰. Smith continued his advance up to Pallikonda when orders came from the Madras government to proceed to Punganur as a show of strength in order to speed up negotiations with the Nizam which led to the upsetting of his timetable⁴⁵¹. After returning to the Carnatic in early March, Smith besieged the fort of Krishnagiri. But this was a strong and well-stocked fort which did not surrender easily. The siege lasted for two months and the fort finally surrendered on May 2⁴⁵². Also, Haidar sent a force of 6000 cavalry under Makhdoom Ali Khan to attack the British forces⁴⁵³. This able commander of the Mysore army knew that attacking the foraging parties and baggage trains of the British columns were

⁴⁴⁸ M.M.D.L.T., p. 229; Wilks, Vol. II, pp. 63-64; Sheikh Ali, p. 101.

⁴⁴⁹ Sheikh Ali, p. 102.

⁴⁵⁰ M.M.D.L.T., p. 230; Wilks, Vol. II, p. 65; Wilson, p. 256.

⁴⁵¹ Nolan, *An Illustrated History*, p. 319; Wilks, Vol. II, p. 65; Wilson, p. 256.

⁴⁵² Kirmani, p. 270; Punganuri, p. 18; Wilks, Vol. II, p. 65; Wilson, p. 256.

⁴⁵³ M.M.D.L.T., p. 230; Punganuri, p. 18.

the most effective tactics. Thus, the siege and the operations in the countryside tied up Smith's army for a considerable time which gave Haidar Ali time to reorganize his forces.

The Advance from the South

Meanwhile, the second detachment under Lieutenant Colonel Wood was given the mission of attacking Haidar's territories in the Carnatic such as Salem, Coimbatore and Dindigul. It commenced its campaign by heading out from Thiruchirappalli in February and advancing towards the fort of Tenkaraikotta. This fort, lying between Yercaud and Dharmapuri, was garrisoned by regular infantry soldiers of the Mysorean army. It initially rejected calls for surrender but did so on February 12 when the British seemed poised to escalate the fort⁴⁵⁴. The next target during the advance was Dharmapuri. There seems to have been stout resistance against the Madras Army during the siege of this fort. British historians like Wilks as well as the Indian chroniclers Kirmani and Punganuri said that this small fort near Kaveripattinam was captured after a battle. Wilks said that the *killedar* of Dharmapuri fought bravely and Wood had to carry the fort by an assault which spread terror among the locals. Kirmani gives a pithy statement that the *killedar* Payindah Khan was killed; but Punganuri said that there was a battle at the fort in which artillery was used and many were killed⁴⁵⁵. Again, De la Tour gave the most detailed account, saying that Payindah Khan (written as Pinda Khan) put up the white flag after the breach was made but the British massacred the surrendering troops including the *killedar*, except for 12 European artillerymen⁴⁵⁶. Wilks and Wilson do not mention this but it was alluded to in a letter written to Robert Palk by his nephew Lieutenant Thomas Palk who said that in one action against Haidar Ali's forts, Wood killed 6000 of Haidar's men which most probably refers to the action in Dharmapuri⁴⁵⁷.

⁴⁵⁴ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 66; Wilson, p. 257.

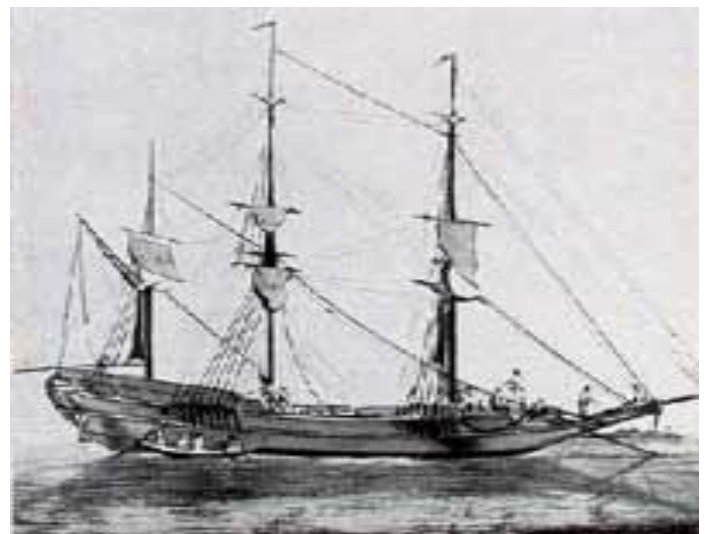
⁴⁵⁵ Kirmani, p. 270; Punganuri, p. 18; Wilks, Vol. II, p. 66; Wilson, p. 257.

⁴⁵⁶ M.M.D.L.T., pp. 232-233.

⁴⁵⁷ Letter from Lt. Thomas Palk to Robert Palk dated October 24, *Palk Manuscripts*, p. 87.



Above: The fort of Mangalore in 1783. Portrait by George Goddard. The fort was the first important territory of Mysore to be captured by the British during their renewed offensive during the First Anglo-Mysore War in 1768. Source: <https://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/apac/other/019wdz000004128u000000000.html>, (accessed on March 1 2016).



Above Left: A ghurab ship used by the Bombay marine. By an unknown artist. Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grab_\(ship\)#/media/File:Bombay_grab.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grab_(ship)#/media/File:Bombay_grab.jpg), (accessed on March 1, 2016).

Above Right: A gallivat ship used by the Maratha navy in 1700s. Source: http://www.thepirateking.com/ships/ship_types.htm, (accessed on March 1, 2016).

The above ships were common on the Arabian coast and formed the bulk of Haidar Ali's navy.

By now Haidar was aware of the threat he was facing on multiple fronts and was taking measures accordingly. He had sent Makhdoom Ali Khan against the detachment of Smith and now sent another cavalry corps of 3000 under Lala Mian to check the progress of Wood. As a further precaution, he kept a corps of select cavalry under Faizullah Khan, who bore the title *Haibat Jung*, in and around the fort of Bangalore⁴⁵⁸. He even tried to solicit the aid of the Marathas by sending Mir Ali Raza Khan, the son of Chanda Sahib, to the Peshwa's court at Pune as his emissary. On his arrival, Raza Khan proposed an alliance against the Madras government and offered a sum of 30 lakhs of rupees as arrears of the *chauth*. This sum would be paid in two instalments, with a tranche of 17 lakhs of rupees paid upfront and the remainder on the actual junction between the Maratha and the Mysore armies. He also asked that the Maratha commanders Gopal Rao Patwardhan and Anand Rao Raaste personally come with their detachments and the balance of the promised amount would be paid to them⁴⁵⁹. Madhav Rao refused any direct aid or intervention as he was involved with his own troubles but allowed Ali Raza Khan to recruit footsoldiers and horsemen from the Maratha territories⁴⁶⁰. This no doubt allowed Haidar to augment the Mysore army and caused a great deal of confusion in Madras.

Wood's detachment proceeded in the northwest direction in its offensive against Haidar's territories over the course of the next several months. His sanguinary victory at Dharmapuri had the desired effect and most of the forts on the route surrendered without a fight. These included, in sequence, Salem, Attur, Chandamangalam and Namakkal⁴⁶¹. This is all the more glaring as forts like Attur and Namakkal were situated on granite peaks and thus made excellent defensive locations. This reflects very poorly on the commanders of the forts who failed to live up to the expectations of Haidar without so much as a semblance of a fight. Wood then proceeded to Erode which was a thriving town but lacked a military fort. By now, the Mysorean cavalry under Lala Mian had reached the town and tried to organize a defence. The garrison in the town would resist Wood's advance while the cavalry attacked the British army in the flanks. When Wood approached Erode, the Mysorean horsemen tried to turn his flanks and rear; but a combination of volley fire and a bayonet charge drove them off⁴⁶². Deprived of cavalry support, the town surrendered. Wood then took Satyamangalam and

⁴⁵⁸ Punganuri, p. 18; Wilks, Vol. II, p. 58.

⁴⁵⁹ Letter from Smith to Orme dated March 28, *Orme MSS*, pub. in Sheikh Ali, pp. 102-103.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid; Sen, *Military System of the Marathas*, p. 234.

⁴⁶¹ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 65; Wilson, p. 257.

⁴⁶² Wilks, Vol. II, p. 66.

Denaickankota and continuing in the western direction captured Coimbatore; which was mainly due to the defection of the *killedar* who was retained in his position along with a British officer⁴⁶³. There is some confusion over what happened next. Wilks said that Wood bypassed the fort of Sankaridurga but Wilson said that it was captured and called it Palghatcherry⁴⁶⁴. It is likely that the fort was captured because Wilks also said later in his account that the commander appointed there withdrew later that year and returned to Madras⁴⁶⁵. He then turned north and took the pass of Gajalahatti in the Nilgiri hills along with that of Kaveripuram⁴⁶⁶. This put him barely over 100 km from Srirangapatna, the capital of Haidar.

At first, it seemed that Wood's possession of these strategic passes would alter the course of the war. It would be a simple matter to descend through these routes into the open countryside of Mysore and then capture the capital city. To this end, Wood erected a strongpoint for overseeing the pass of Gajalahatti and set up another on the top of the hill. He remained in this position for the next 18 days to consolidate and await reinforcements, confidently informing Madras that these passes were the only routes to Mysore⁴⁶⁷. But during this time roving cavalry units regularly raided his installations and caused him acute discomfort. According to Wilks, Wood was continually harassed by the horsemen and he expressed his opinion to Madras that it was impossible to stop them from attacking him⁴⁶⁸. This ultimately seems to have forced him to withdraw from the area. He left two battalions of sepoy to watch over the passes and then turned to the south. Even the records of the Madras government are vague on this point⁴⁶⁹. It is most probable that this is to cover up Wood's disappointing retreat from his strategic positions. What is undisputed is that he then headed towards the south against Haidar's possessions in the Carnatic and took the forts at Dharapuram and Avarakurichi in the second half of the year 1768. Wood climaxed his campaign in the Carnatic by the capture of the fort of Dindigul on August 3 which he took by escalading over the walls⁴⁷⁰. This was no doubt a major loss of face for Haidar as Dindigul had been his *jagir* when he was in the service of the Wodeyar king. It was at this point that he received orders to reinforce Smith causing him to break off the campaign in the south and

⁴⁶³ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 104.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid, pp. 65-66; Wilson, p. 268.

⁴⁶⁵ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 105.

⁴⁶⁶ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 65; Wilson, p. 257

⁴⁶⁷ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 66.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid, pp.66-67.

⁴⁶⁹ Sheikh Ali, p. 103; Wilks, Vol. II, pp. 65-67; Wilson, p. 257.

⁴⁷⁰ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 65; Wilson, p. 257.

head to the north to Krishnagiri. Wood put the captured forts in the Carnatic Payanghat under the overall command of a Swiss named Freschman (written as Frichman in De la Tour's account) and headed north in mid-August⁴⁷¹.

Haidar's advance and the recapture of Mangalore

Haidar was deeply perturbed at the simultaneous advance of three armies towards his domains. He would have to deal with each of them in turn. The most serious threat lay in Mangalore as the port city was very strategic for the affairs of Mysore and also it was the gateway to the territories of Bidanur and Chitradurga. Also, the forces of Smith and Wood had been effectively checked in their advance by the cavalry detachments of Makhdoom Ali and Lala Mian respectively and there was no immediate danger of attacks from the east and the south. Therefore Haidar decided to personally lead the attack against Mangalore where he had sent his son. He had already appointed Faizullah Khan as commander of the fort of Bangalore and so entrusted the safety of the home territories to him. In early May, Haidar set out for Mangalore with a sizeable number of troops, mostly cavalry for speed. The commander of the Bombay Army Major Gouin had already returned to Bombay on April 27 leaving behind a garrison of 200 Europeans, 1200 sepoys and 41 cannons in the fort of Mangalore⁴⁷². This force had seldom ventured out of the fort due to effective cavalry attacks by Tipu and Latif Ali Beg. The result was that the morale among the British troops was very low and they were susceptible to attack.

Haidar joined the combined forces of his son and his commander with his contingent in the second week of May⁴⁷³. This reinforced army launched a massive attack on the fort of Mangalore on May 11. De la Tour and Kirmani said that Tipu launched a massive cavalry attack on the fort and managed to enter it when the gates opened to let the guards and other fugitives in⁴⁷⁴. The two also said that Tipu acted on his own before the junction with Haidar. But this is contradicted by Punganuri, Wilks and the records of the Madras Army who said that Haidar's force took part in the attack; but Charles Low in his account said that Haidar Ali appeared off the fort of Mangalore but the author did not say that he fought⁴⁷⁵. Reconciling

⁴⁷¹ M.M.D.L.T., p. 240; Wilks, Vol. II, p. 109; Wilson, p. 269.

⁴⁷² C.R. Low, p. 154, Letter from Bombay to Madras dated May 14, *M.M.S.P.*, pub. in Sheikh Ali, p. 104; Wilks, Vol. II, p. 59.

⁴⁷³ C.R. Low, p. 154.

⁴⁷⁴ Kirmani, pp. 268-269; M.M.D.L.T., pp. 234-235.

⁴⁷⁵ C.R. Low, p. 154; Letter from Bombay to Madras dated May 14, pub. in Sheikh Ali, p. 104; Punganuri, p. 18; Wilks, Vol. II, p. 59.

these sources, it seems likely that it was Tipu who led the attack on the fort while Haidar waited outside with the main army. The surprise attack was a complete success and chaos reigned in the British camp. In what Colonel Smith termed disgraceful, the garrison attempted a feeble defence which failed; and when that proved futile, the soldiers fled towards the shore leaving behind their sick and wounded who became prisoners⁴⁷⁶. Estimates of the number of captives vary. De la Tour said that hundreds of Europeans and thousands of sepoys were captured; but this seems to be an exaggeration for the flattery of his patron. British records give a more plausible figure of 80 Europeans and 180 sepoys that were taken along with all the cannons and stores⁴⁷⁷.

Although the Bombay Army managed to board the ships on the shore but three transport ships were captured by Haidar and his troops who were in the vicinity. These included the ship *Salamander* which was carrying official papers as well as treasure from Bombay⁴⁷⁸. Bereft of British troops, other places like Honnavar and Basavaraja Durga fell in quick succession to the advancing Mysorean troops. Haidar imprisoned several Portuguese merchants and Jesuit priests in Mangalore for collaborating with the British. But he released them after the war⁴⁷⁹. This marked the end of the Mangalore campaign. Having accomplished this mission, Haidar was able to withdraw across the Western Ghats with most of his troops by June before the arrival of the southwest monsoon. The recapture of Mangalore and the ejection of the British from the Kanara coast had resulted in a complete victory for the Mysore army. Coming in the wake of a series of defeats and retreats since the beginning of the year, this victory was a major morale-booster for Haidar and a serious loss of face for the East India Company. Moreover, he had been able to seize several cannons as well as large amounts of stores as well as a few ships which yielded treasure to replenish his coffers, thus considerably augmenting his *materiel* for the war effort. Sheikh Ali went so far as to say that this campaign marked the turning point of the war with Haidar going on the offensive⁴⁸⁰. This was not quite the case as subsequent events showed. But the threat from the western coast had been eliminated for the duration of the war.

The spoils of the Mangalore campaign were sent with the main army under the command of Tipu back to Mysore and Bangalore over the pass of Kukke Subrahmanya which was the

⁴⁷⁶ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 59.

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid, p. 59; M.M.D.L.T., p. 235.

⁴⁷⁸ Letter from Bombay to Madras dated May 14, pub. in Sheikh Ali, p. 104; M.M.D.L.T., p. 235.

⁴⁷⁹ M.M.D.L.T., p. 236.

⁴⁸⁰ Sheikh Ali, p. 105.

most direct route. But Haidar himself took a select detachment of cavalry and went over the hills to Bidanur⁴⁸¹. During the attack on Mangalore by the Bombay Army, he had asked the Polygars of the nearby areas such as Rayadurga and Chitradurga to send troops for the defence of the port city; but the promised help had not been forthcoming⁴⁸². Therefore, the Mysore ruler felt that punitive measures were necessary. On reaching Bidanur, Haidar summoned the neighbouring Polygars, ostensibly for the purpose of tallying their revenue statements. The chieftains could hardly ignore the orders of the most powerful man in the region and so gathered together in the city. Once they had assembled in his presence, Haidar announced that he had discovered treasonous conduct on their part by collaborating with the British; but instead of punishing them with death he would levy a heavy fine on them. Torture was used on those who were late in the payment. Having realised a large amount of money in these transactions, Haidar set out for his capital in June⁴⁸³. The exigencies of war may have justified the treatment of the local chieftains but this would cause further discontent later and Haidar was lax in thinking about their future conduct.

Developments in the Malabar

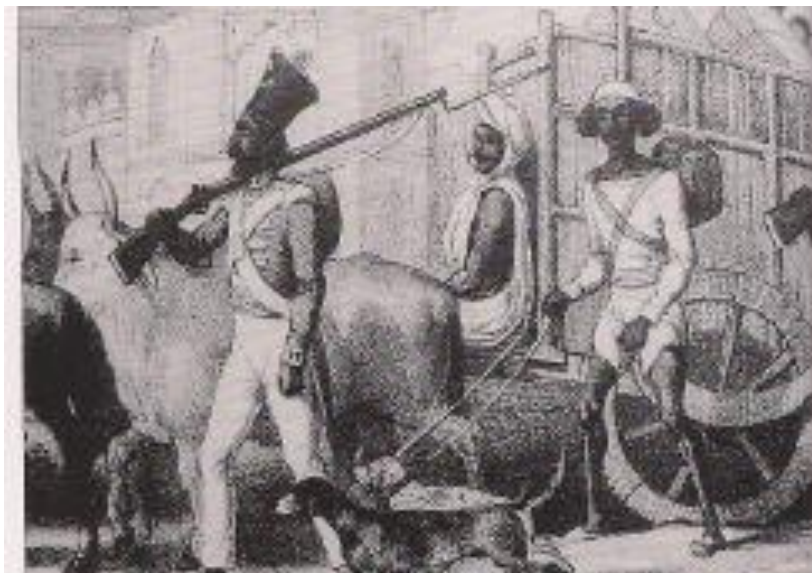
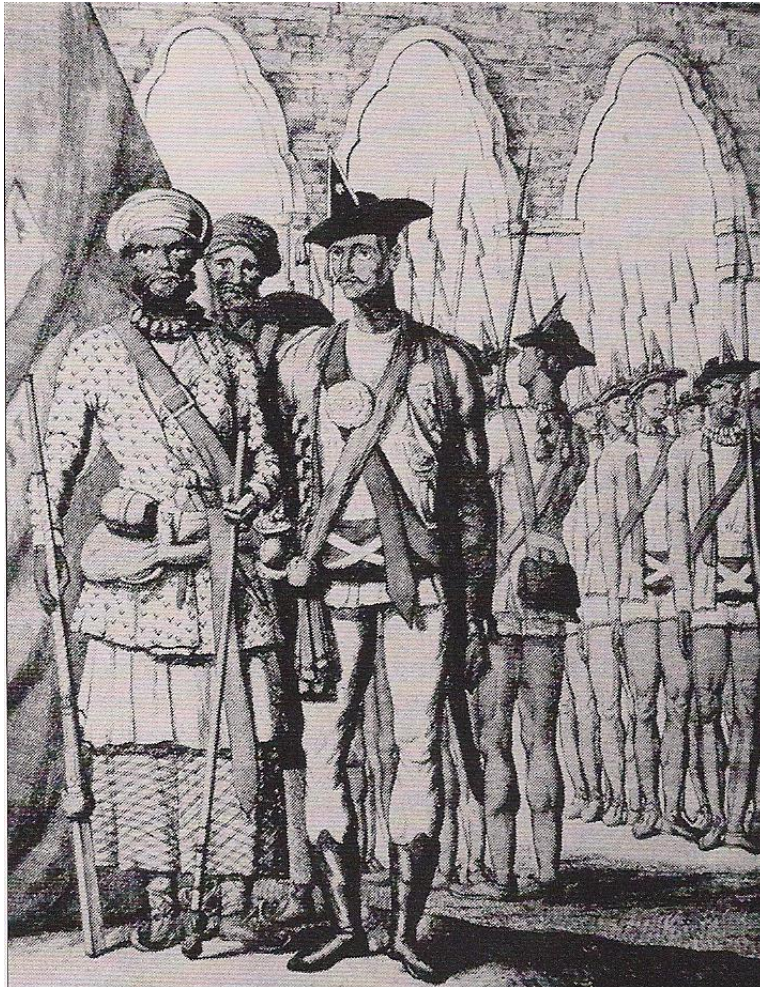
Meanwhile, events were rapidly coming to a head in the northern Malabar. By the summer, many of blockhouses Haidar had set up in the Malabar area had been captured and looted by the Nair rebels and his commander in the Cannanore region, Asad Khan Mehtari, had been killed. Also in February during the Bombay Army's operations in the Kanara coast, the British soldiers stationed in the British factory at Tellicherry in the Malabar attacked one of Haidar's blockhouses in Cannanore but were repulsed by the Mysore troops. The British army lost 57 Europeans and 33 sepoy in this encounter⁴⁸⁴. This defeat curtailed the British activities in the Kerala region where it was recognised that the force at hand was too small and an attack would have to be postponed until the troops were reinforced which was not possible with the retreat of the Bombay Army. But the British continued to instigate the Nairs and send material support to the rebels. Haidar realised that it would be difficult to hold the Malabar as it would entail more troops than he could spare at the moment. The only alternative was to make peace till he could pay more attention to the region. Therefore, he instructed Madana, his *vakil* in Coimbatore to parley with the Nair chiefs for the best terms.

⁴⁸¹ Wilks, Vol. II, pp. 59-60.

⁴⁸² M.M.D.L.T., p. 230.




⁴⁸³ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 60.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid, pp. 58-61; Punganuri, p. 18.



Top: Troops of the the Bengal army in the 1780s. Based on a sketch by the artist Solvyns. Source: Reid, *Armies of the East India Company*, p. 9.
 Bottom: The Madras army on the march with its supply train in tow, c.1800. Based on an illustration by Bellew. Source: Reid, *Armies*, p. 20.
 The troops illustrated above would have been similar to those that participated in the First Anglo-Mysore War.



	British Army		Mysore Army		Nizam's Army
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Above: The above map illustrates the events from January to July 1768 and covers the complex manoeuvring involved.

The British army advanced along several axes:

W.) The Bengal army under Lieutenant-Colonel Peach landed at Masulipatnam and advanced into the Nizam's domains.

X.) The Bombay army under Major Gouin landed at Mangalore and captured several forts in the vicinity.

Y.) The Madras army detachment under Colonel Smith advanced from Punganur to:- Y1.) Krishnagiri Y2.) Kolar and the forts in the vicinity.

Z.) The Madras army detachment under Lieutenant-Colonel Wood advanced from Thiruchirappalli to:- Z1.) Dharmapuri Z2.) Salem Z3.) Erode Z4.) Denaickankote Z5.) Gajalahatti Z5.) Coimbatore Z6.) Palakkad Z7.) Dindigul Z8.) Kolar to reinforce Smith's detachment.

The Mysore army went on the following axes: 1.) Mysore to Mangalore 2.) Mysore to Gajalahatti 3.) Mysore to Kolar.

The Nizam's army was retreating from Punganur in the direction of Gurramkonda.

Madana opened negotiations with the rebellious chiefs, stating that Haidar found that the Malabar consumed too many of his resources and hence the Mysore ruler would vacate the territory if he received a heavy tribute; but he would retain the fort of Palakkad. Furthermore, those who paid the sum would be restored their lands but those who refused would have their lands ceded to the former. Most of the chiefs agreed to these terms and not only coughed up a huge sum as ransom but also stopped the attacks on the Mysorean troops. It was also agreed that the Mapilla ruler Ali Raja in Cannanore would not be disturbed and Palakkad would remain under Haidar's control. This strategically situated fort would be useful to launch an invasion in the future. With the completion of the payment, most of Haidar's troops left for Mysore through the passes in the Palakkad gap in July⁴⁸⁵. Overall, Haidar had reason to feel satisfied with the way events played out in the Malabar. He had been able to extricate most of his troops in the region with whom he could reinforce his army for the upcoming campaign. Also he had realised a substantial sum of money with which he could replenish his treasury. And last, but not least, he still possessed the vital fort of Palakkad in the vicinity of Coimbatore with which he could attack the region again when the time came.

The Advance of Colonel Smith

By this time, the Court of Directors of the East India Company in London was growing weary of the rising costs of the war and the seemingly slow progress of the Madras Army. In a letter to the Madras government, the directors criticised the Council members saying "If it had not been for the imprudent measures you have taken, the Country powers would have left you in peace"⁴⁸⁶. They urged for the making of peace as soon as possible on the lines of the treaty signed with the Nizam. They also stated that the Company was not keen on territorial expansion and wished to rely on negotiations with the Indian powers in order to keep a check on each other and thus maintain the balance of power⁴⁸⁷. But the Madras government at Fort St. George was full of confidence as the Madras Army had captured a number of forts belonging to Haidar and thus felt that his complete defeat was only a matter of time. As a result, it disregarded the opinions from London and decided to pursue the campaign against Mysore to its logical conclusion. It had the support of the Bombay and Calcutta governments in these designs and thus felt that its policy of expansion was justified.

⁴⁸⁵ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 61.

⁴⁸⁶ Letter from the Board to Madras dated May 13, 1768, *Despatches to Madras*, vol. 4, pub. in Sheikh Ali, p. 105.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid.

Meanwhile, Colonel Smith had spent two months in the siege of Krishnagiri. The commander of the army was more predisposed towards bypassing the strongly-held fortress and taking other forts in the vicinity in order to isolate it. But Krishnagiri was deemed vital by the Madras government for subsequent operations of the army towards Bangalore and so Smith was under special orders to reduce it. The garrison finally surrendered on May 2⁴⁸⁸. But the siege had consumed a large amount of the precious supplies of the army and now the cavalry under Makhdoom Ali Khan was also in the region and it could effectively interfere with the baggage trains. Smith would have preferred to wait till supply depots had been established with which he could replenish his army; but orders from Madras through the Field Deputies told him to continue his advance in the northwest direction. The Council at Fort St. George had learnt that Haidar had proceeded towards Mangalore; and so they felt confident that there would be scant resistance at the forts in the Mysore territory. The Field Deputies i.e. John Call and Mackay proposed instead that the supply depots could be established at Kolar so that they would be of direct assistance to the army in the reduction of the forts in the territories of Mysore, especially the important fort of Bangalore⁴⁸⁹. Thus Smith had no choice but to obey orders and press on with his advance in spite of the precarious state of his food supply.

On June 8, the advance guard of the Madras Army under Colonel Donald Campbell went up through the pass at Budikote and had captured the fort. This opened the route to the flat, level terrain of the Mysore domains and the mountainous country was left behind; and so the Madras Army was now able to advance rapidly. The small mud fort of Venkatagiri had fallen on June 16; and Campbell established a supply depot and a communications post there. He then sent a detachment to retrace its steps to the south in order to seize the pass and the redoubt of Pedanayakadurga and the successful completion of this task secured the flanks and the lines of communication of the Madras Army⁴⁹⁰. Campbell now proceeded towards the strong fort of Mulbagal which lay on the route to Kolar. The town within the mud walls at the base of the fort surrendered immediately but the citadel held out and the garrison there showed no inclination to surrender. The upper fort was well-stocked with weapons and supplies while the Madras Army lacked the siege guns needed for an assault. Colonel

⁴⁸⁸ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 69; Wilson, p. 256.

⁴⁸⁹ Letter from the Deputies to Madras dated April 25, 1768, *M.M.S.P.*, pub. in Sheikh Ali, pp. 105-106; Wilks, Vol. II, p. 69.

⁴⁹⁰ Wilks, Vol. II, pp. 69-70; Wilson, p. 256.

Campbell decided that the stronghold could not be taken by force and hence decided to use a stratagem⁴⁹¹.

The Capture of Mulbagal

The Madras Army officer opened secret negotiations with the *killedar* Jafar Hussain Khan and hatched a plan to capture the citadel. In accordance with this, Campbell pretended to move off in the direction of Kolar after leaving a detachment in the lower town. As Hussain Khan had been commissioned by his sovereign to enlist as many European-trained sepoys as possible, even if they came from the British side, a company of 200 sepoys pretended to desert to the service of the *killedar*. The treacherous commandant duly instructed his subordinates to expect that number to enter the citadel. On the night of June 23, Captain Matthews (who later as general would be captured by Tipu and would die in captivity in 1784) dressed as an Indian officer and with his section ascended the hill at four o' clock. He went along the prearranged route and met no opposition from the garrison in the citadel and duly entered the fort. As soon as it was daylight, the Madras Army detachment took over the positions from the surprised garrison of the fort which put up little resistance⁴⁹². Wilks said that the only disloyal officer was Hussain Khan, the *killedar*, and after the capitulation he entered the service of Nawab Mohammad Ali⁴⁹³.

De la Tour gave a different version on the capture of Mulbagal. He does not impute any treachery to the *killedar* and instead said that Colonel Campbell intercepted a *harkara* (messenger) from Makhdoom Ali who was bearing a message informing the commandant of the impending British attack and to await a detachment of infantrymen as reinforcements. The messenger was then substituted by one of his own men who carried the message to Hussain Khan and told him to open the gates of the fort, stating that the relief force had arrived, and the detachment of the Madras Army promptly took over⁴⁹⁴. However, this does not ring true as this is not mentioned in other sources, either British or Indian. As Campbell had already captured the town at the base of the fort, it is unlikely that the *killedar* would not have known of the British army at his gates. In the case of a surprise attack, he would certainly have resisted if he was not in collaboration with the attackers. Therefore, it is very likely that Hussain Khan betrayed Haidar and opened the gates of the fort to the Madras

⁴⁹¹ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 70; Wilson, p. 256.

⁴⁹² Nolan, pp. 319-320; Wilks, Vol. II, pp. 70-71.

⁴⁹³ Wilks, Vol. II, pp. 70-71.

⁴⁹⁴ M.M.D.L.T., p. 231.

Army. This again shows the lack of judgement shown by Haidar in the appointment of his subordinates. But De la Tour seems to be reluctant to highlight too many faults in Haidar's command abilities.

Aftermath

Meanwhile, Colonel Campbell led the rest of his contingent to Kolar and besieged it on the same day Mulbagal capitulated. Initially, the commander of the garrison held out and did not surrender against the invading army. So Campbell started the siege operations on the fort. But when the British army started escalating the glacis of the fort, he surrendered on June 28 at discretion i.e. the troops and the commander were allowed to march out with their personal belongings⁴⁹⁵. This was in line with the practices elsewhere in the Indian subcontinent among all the regional powers. Also, it encouraged defection and early surrender among the fortress commanders. By now, the main army under Smith had ascended up the passes near Budikote and had proceeded to Arlier (now the village of Araleri) near Kolar. They decided to set up a base there in order to review the situation and make further plans and so Campbell went to join forces with Smith. It was also here that the Nawab Mohammad Ali joined the Madras Army⁴⁹⁶. The fact that it took nearly a month for the main army to join the advance guard testifies to the lack of transport available to the Madras Army which curtailed its speed. The purpose of the stop at Arlier was mainly to establish a supply depot and wait for the baggage train carrying the stores. This problem would repeatedly come back to haunt the British troops.

Also on June 28, Colonel Smith received intelligence that Makhdoom Ali Khan was encamped with his detachment at the town of Bagalur around 30 km to southwest from the Madras Army's current position. The commander saw the opportunity of striking a telling blow against the Mysore army by capturing or killing one of its best commanders. He immediately despatched a flying column under Captain Cosby, a veteran of the battle of Thiruvannamalai, armed with light weapons to attack the camp at Bagalur. He was confident that this would be sufficient to take on the cavalry detachment of Makhdoom which had no answer to the volley fire and the bayonet charge of the British troops. Cosby hurried under the cover of darkness to Bagalur; and he hoped to reach his destination during the night itself in order to make a surprise attack. But again he had underestimated travelling through the

⁴⁹⁵ Kirmani, p. 271; Wilks, Vol. II, p. 71; Wilson, p. 256.

⁴⁹⁶ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 71.

brushwood country which impeded his march; and it was daylight before he reached Bagalur. Thus the element of surprise had been lost and Makhdoom was able to make preparations to resist the attack. This brother-in-law of Haidar gave a strong fight to the adversary and was able to conduct a fighting retreat with minimal losses. Cosby could not pursue him as his troops were already exhausted by the night's marching and the battle in the morning and also because they had no cavalry. The captain had to content himself with occupying Bagalur which the Polygar of the place promptly gave up to him⁴⁹⁷. This battle was not mentioned in the Mysorean accounts but an oblique reference was given in the narrative of De la Tour who said Makhdoom had his revenge on the British a few days after the fall of Mulbagal⁴⁹⁸. He went on to say that the Mysorean commander recaptured the fort using a stratagem similar to the one used by Colonel Campbell but this seems rather fanciful as Mulbagal remained in the hands of the British for several months. So Wilks account seems more plausible in this regard but De la Tour's statement can also be taken as an indication of the battle of Bagalur where Makhdoom Ali Khan acquitted himself well.

Captain Cosby set up camp at Bagalur where he was joined by the main army a couple of days later. The combined army set out for their next destination, Hosur, which they reached and besieged on July 3. Here also the commander of the fort put up a semblance of resistance initially but surrendered when the Madras Army troops started escalating on July 11⁴⁹⁹. The army stopped here in order to recuperate while Cosby led a detachment to the north and captured the fort of Anekal. He then headed south and captured the fortress of Denkanikottai. It must be mentioned here that most of the forts in the British campaign did not fall to breaches in the walls by the artillery. The field guns possessed by the Madras Army for the operations were not capable of inflicting heavy damage on these structures. Usually, the *killedars* of the fortresses surrendered when the British troops appeared to escalate the battlements. These commandants did not have the will in them to fight the British and usually preferred an early capitulation to gain favourable terms of surrender. Often the *killedars* knew which way the wind was blowing and so opened the gates of the fort promptly without the least semblance of resistance. Thus the Madras Army encountered minimal resistance from the fort commandants during the advance.

⁴⁹⁷ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 71.

⁴⁹⁸ M.M.D.L.T., p. 233.

⁴⁹⁹ Kirmani, p. 271; Wilks, Vol. II, p. 72; Wilson, p. 256.

Colonel Smith was by now aware that he had a very formidable undertaking ahead in order to reduce the stronger forts in the country ahead and so needed adequate preparation. Accordingly he wrote to Madras asking Lieutenant-Colonel Wood to join him with his detachment and that the combined army proceed onwards into Mysore territory⁵⁰⁰. This would serve a dual purpose. Firstly, the greatly enhanced and united Madras Army would overawe the Mysore troops and would set the stage for the early surrender of the forts. Secondly, the supply situation would greatly improve as there would not be need to divide the existing stores between two separate armies on the field and there would be more soldiers to guard the baggage trains during the transit. Furthermore, having been attacked several times by Makhdoom Ali, Smith was aware of the need for a cavalry corps in order to pursue him. He had written to Madras asking that the horsemen of Murari Rao Ghorpade be sent to join his army as they were the most reliable cavalry forces available to the Madras Army⁵⁰¹. The Maratha chieftain of Gooty had arrived in Madras in January with his contingent but he had been retained in the city in order to defend it from cavalry attacks such as that by Tipu the previous year. But now cavalry was essential to Smith's forces to defeat the regular cavalry attacks by the Mysore army on the British troops and the baggage trains. He also proposed that the British officers train several sections of the Nawab's cavalry and assume command over them⁵⁰². The Madras government agreed to these requests and sent Murari Rao north with his troop of cavalry and infantry. The Council now had reason to feel secure because Haidar was on the defensive and almost all his possessions in the Carnatic-Payanghat were in British hands.

Colonel Smith set up his base in the surroundings of Hosur and waited there for the reinforcements and supplies promised to him. He remained mostly inactive throughout the rest of July; the only conquest was the fort of Hoskote in the northwest during this period⁵⁰³. But this enforced rest was necessary as the next important fort was Bangalore which expectedly would be well-defended. Smith could undertake this campaign only after substantially augmenting his forces as they were now approaching the heartland of the Mysore territories. Also, Nawab Mohammad Ali Khan had taken ill and was not in a position for active movement. Smith used the time to cultivate local allies. The local chieftain Younis Khan had joined him with 300 cavalry and had assisted him in the capture of Hoskote. The

⁵⁰⁰ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 74; Wilson, p. 257.

⁵⁰¹ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 73.

⁵⁰² Ibid.

⁵⁰³ Ibid; Wilson, p. 257.

Polygars of Anekal, Bagalur and Hoskote gave substantial assistance to the Madras Army in the form of money and supplies. On August 4, Murari Rao finally arrived in Hoskote with a contingent of 3000 cavalry and 2000 infantry, mostly irregulars, along with a few cannons which were mostly old and worn out. But this cavalry force was very welcome in order to counter-balance Haidar's superiority in this department. Also, Lieutenant-Colonel Wood was moving through the pass of Thopur in the Baramahal districts in order to join Smith and the main army⁵⁰⁴. But as he had to move mostly on foot due to the lack of transport, it would take him a while to reach Hoskote, the proposed point of junction. Till then Smith would be left to his own devices.

De la Tour narrated an interesting incident that purportedly took place around this time. When Colonel Smith was camped at Hoskote, the townspeople of Devanahalli came in an entourage to him to offer their submission and tributes. They told the commander of the Madras Army that the town received special favour and privileges as it was the birthplace and residence of Haidar Ali (De la Tour confuses this with the birthplace of Tipu). Smith replied that he respected the great sovereign of Mysore and would set an example in protecting the town. He refused the tributes offered by the townsmen and ordered his men not to enter the town without his permission. Also, he set up a security camp nearby to provide protection for Devanahalli⁵⁰⁵. There is no mention of this in other sources but it is certainly consistent with the character of Colonel Joseph Smith. After facing Haidar and his army in several battles, he seems to have developed a grudging admiration for his adversary by describing him as a formidable opponent in the despatches to Madras.

In the meantime, Haidar Ali was not lying idle. He had seen the fall of his fortresses in a sequential manner approaching towards Mysore on the east and knew that the next target of the Madras Army would be Bangalore. He came to the fort of Bangalore with all his available forces he could muster in early August (Wilks said that it was on the same day that Murari Rao joined Smith). Once there he held a review of the forces on hand. According to Punganuri, the forces of Haidar numbered 18,000 cavalry; 20,000 infantry; 12,000 Bedar irregulars; and 50 pieces of artillery⁵⁰⁶. He left most of the army with the garrison in Bangalore and set out to challenge the invading army with the cream of his cavalry. This was mainly because his horsemen rather than his infantry had proved reliable in most of the

⁵⁰⁴ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 73-74.

⁵⁰⁵ M.M.D.L.T., pp. 233-234.

⁵⁰⁶ Punganuri, p. 18; Wilks, Vol. II, p. 75.

encounters with the British so far; and hence he could place greater faith in them. The infantry and artillery could be counted upon to defend the fort from within the bastions; and the garrison was under the command of the trusted Faizullah Khan who had proved his loyalty before. Haidar was also aware of the precarious state of victualling in Smith's army and so felt that a strike by the cavalry at the moment would be an ideal stroke.

The Battle of Hoskote

The Madras Army sighted the cavalry of the Mysore army which was on a reconnaissance patrol in the vicinity of Hoskote on August 9th⁵⁰⁷. The Mysore cavalry began making regular raids on the British positions from then on. The loot was rich as the entourage of Mohammad Ali Khan was laden with treasure. As there is no record of any pursuit of the Mysore cavalry by Murari Rao's troops it can be assumed that they were ineffective in stopping the raids. It is under these circumstances that the battle of Hoskote took place between the troops of Haidar and Murari Rao. The events leading up to the battle are obscure. De la Tour said that Murari Rao proposed a siege of Chikkaballapur by the British troops in order to break the deadlock between the opposite sides. If the fort was captured, then its vast quantities of stores of rice and poultry would fall into their hands. Smith left with his detachment towards Chikkaballapur leaving a strong force to guard the camp at Hoskote where Mohammad Ali, Call and Mackay remained with Murari Rao. The chieftain of Gooty probably remained to guard the camp against cavalry attacks by Haidar. There is no mention of this detour by Smith in the accounts of Wilks or Wilson. But it is hinted at by the former who states that Smith told Murari Rao to remain within the camp perimeter⁵⁰⁸. Also this, would explain why the commanding officer of the Madras Army would not play a role in the upcoming battle.

Haidar's cavalry harassed Smith on his journey to Chikkaballapur but was unable to prevent him from laying siege to that fort⁵⁰⁹. But now an opportunity at the base camp in Hoskote presented itself. The most able commander of the Madras Army, i.e. Colonel Smith, was not present there and the overall security was in the hands of Murari Rao. Haidar decided to make a surprise attack on Murari Rao's camp and possibly capture or kill him. He already had strong personal animosity to the Rao and so sought to settle old scores. Mark Wilks gives the most detailed account of the battle. On the night of August 22, Haidar set up 6000 of his cavalry in two sections under his subordinate commanders with elephants in the advance

⁵⁰⁷ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 75.

⁵⁰⁸ M.M.D.L.T., pp. 236-237; Wilks, Vol. II, p. 75.

⁵⁰⁹ M.M.D.L.T., p. 237.

guard to breach the pickets of Murari Rao's camp and head straight to his tent for a decapitating strike; each of these would be followed by a detachment of his infantry, mostly irregulars, for support⁵¹⁰. Haidar was with the main army to guard against any reinforcement by the British forces. The initial penetration went well and confusion reigned in the Maratha camp. But Murari Rao soon recovered his wits. Noticing that the cavalry was attacking, he ordered his men not to mount their steeds but cut down every man on a horse. By now the British troops had also joined in the melee and the battle became a confused tussle in the darkness. During this time, Murari Rao's elephant was wounded and so it ran through the camp waving its chain with which many people were wounded, particularly in the cavalry due to their upper positions⁵¹¹. Wilks said that the infantry of Haidar was alarmed at the sight of the elephant going about and, seeing the cavalry making a backward movement to avoid the animal, felt that the attack had not succeeded and so beat a hasty retreat⁵¹². With the coming of dawn, the attack ceased. The Mysorean troops withdrew from the camp because in the daylight the British forces were much more formidable due to their advanced weapons and skills in gunnery.

The battle that had taken place at Hoskote had mixed results. There is considerable controversy over the events of the night as historians give conflicting accounts. Kirmani as usual gave a rosy account of Haidar's exploits saying that the Nawab (Haidar) attacked the armies of the English (sic) and Rao which were encamped near Narsipuram and wounded the Maratha *sardar* who was forced to flight leaving behind his guns and equipment. He went on to say that Haidar took many prisoners and pack animals and went to Karur with them⁵¹³. This is obviously an exaggeration as the encounter took place near Hoskote as given in the other sources and Haidar couldn't immediately have gone to Karur. Punganuri gives a more sober though brief account in which he states that Haidar attacked the Rao's camp at night where he slew many of his men and seized horses and other booty. It is also said that Murari Rao was wounded and fled; and then Haidar returned to Bangalore⁵¹⁴. He does not mention any fight with the British troops. De la Tour echoed Kirmani by saying that a full-scale battle took place. According to his account, Haidar put his troops in front of Hoskote at night and then attacked a weakly defended suburb at dawn and took it without much difficulty

⁵¹⁰ Punganuri, p. 18; Sinha, p. 131; Wilks, Vol. II, p. 76.

⁵¹¹ Wilks, Vol. II, pp. 76-77.

⁵¹² Wilks, Vol. II, pp. 76-77; Fortescue, p. 127; Nolan, p. 320.

⁵¹³ Kirmani, pp. 273-274.

⁵¹⁴ Punganuri, p. 18.

capturing a number of European and Indian soldiers. His army then placed ladders against the ramparts in order to scale the fort. The result was panic in the opposite camp where Mohammad Ali urged John Call to recall Colonel Smith from Chikkaballapur and then fled towards Madras with the Field Deputies leaving his guns and powder at Hoskote⁵¹⁵. This is clearly an exaggeration as Punganuri and Kirmani said that the action was mainly against Murari Rao and involved mainly cavalry. However, the assertion that Smith was away from the camp seems true as it would account for his absence during the battle.

Thus, the account of Wilks is more reliable in this regard. But this also must be used with caution. He said that Haidar suffered 300 casualties in this action while Murari Rao lost 18 men and 30 horses. But the Rao and his nephew were also wounded in the battle, the latter seriously, while Younis Khan nearly had his arm severed by a sword. Also, Captain Michael Gee, the *aide de camp* to Smith was also killed with some other British soldiers when they entered the skirmish⁵¹⁶. In view of these casualty figures, it is difficult to believe that the allied forces suffered minimal losses while inflicting serious blows to their adversary. The reluctance of the British sources to describe British casualties of the battle and the reaction of Smith and the Field Deputies in the aftermath suggests that a cover-up was intended. Even the letter from Thomas Palk to his uncle hints at things not going well for the British contingent⁵¹⁷. Therefore, it can be surmised that Haidar dealt a serious blow to the allied army even though he had to retreat; and that he captured several guns and horses, at least from Murari Rao's camp. This would explain why there was no pursuit of the Mysore army. Also it would account for statements in the non-British sources that the battle of Hoskote was at least a tactical victory for Haidar. Probably Wilks describes the battle as a reverse for Haidar because an attack followed by a retreat did not fit in with the European conception of warfare.

The Junction of Smith and Wood

By the end of August, Haidar had received news that Lieutenant-Colonel Wood was on the march through the pass of Budikote in order to rendezvous with Smith. This presented new concerns as the reinforced Madras Army could take Bangalore and thus the heartland of Mysore would be open to invasion. He made preparations to meet this fresh challenge by moving his family and much of his treasure to the impregnable fort of Savandurga. The

⁵¹⁵ M.M.D.L.T., pp. 237-238.

⁵¹⁶ Letter from Thomas Palk to Robert Palk dated October 24, *Palk Manuscripts*, p. 87; Wilks, Vol. II, p. 77.

⁵¹⁷ *Palk Manuscripts*, p. 87.

garrison in Bangalore itself was strengthened and was placed nominally under the command of Tipu but Haidar's uncle Ibrahim was the effective commander⁵¹⁸. Haidar now decided to attack Wood's detachment before it reached its destination. He left Bangalore on September 3 with a strong cavalry detachment for this purpose using a circuitous route to avoid Smith's forces. But the latter got wind of it and decided to pre-empt him by joining with Wood first. Accordingly, Smith sent Mohammad Ali and the Field Deputies with a strong escort to Kolar on September 4 and then he set out himself for Budikote. En route, he stopped at Malur to divest himself of all non-essentials for the sake of speed which included his baggage, tents and camp followers⁵¹⁹. This was necessary as time was of the essence because Wood was not aware that Haidar was going to cut him off. Smith seems to have formed an opinion of Haidar as a formidable opponent who could only be taken out with strong measures. Since the Mysore ruler was personally leading the contingent against Wood, Smith seems to have realised that a united action was necessary.

On September 6, Wood's detachment was heading through the passes in the mountains to reach Budikote, the agreed junction point. The route took him through a narrow defile in the northwest direction for several km after which it opened and turned to the west. Haidar positioned himself at the bend in the pass on the eastern slopes. His plan was to ambush the Mysore troops when they came within range; and within the narrow space they would be easy targets. But now, unknown to him, Smith was also approaching the hills. The commander of the Madras Army regularly sent out scouts to hilltops to survey the surroundings and report suspicious movements. It was a major intelligence failure on Haidar's part that he failed to capture or deflect these scouts. They managed to locate Haidar's army lying in ambush for Wood's troops which were coming towards Budikote⁵²⁰. Smith saw the perfect opportunity to turn the tables on the Mysore army. If he reached the mouth of the defile then he could wage a surprise attack on the Mysore troops and then form a junction with Wood. He sent messengers to warn Wood about the danger and also to apprise him of the impending manoeuvre, but apparently they did not get through. Just as he reached the position and was about to form a volley, Wood saw his troops and fired cannons as salutations to his commander. This alerted Haidar to his dangerous position between two British armies which could crush him. He immediately withdrew his troops from the hill and retreated to look for a more favourable location.

⁵¹⁸ Punganuri, p. 18; Wilks, Vol. II, pp. 77-78.

⁵¹⁹ Sinha, p. 132; Wilks, Vol. II, p. 78.

⁵²⁰ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 79; Wilson, p. 258.

Smith was not going to let go of his quarry and so immediately he gave chase. But the soldiers on foot of the Madras Army were no match for the fleet-footed steeds of Haidar. Still Smith and Wood gave chase by dragging their artillery along with them. Haidar tried to circle around them to attack the baggage that was left behind. During the pursuit, Haidar managed to capture two guns of Wood's detachment which had got separated from the main army. But as he could not drag these heavy cannons with his cavalry he had to abandon them and they were regained by the British troops. One section of his cavalry also attacked the baggage train and managed to loot some stores before being driven off by Colonel Lang⁵²¹. This officer was ordered by Wood to go in pursuit of Haidar with a light column for speed. But even this was to no avail as on reaching the open country north of Budikote, Haidar could easily disperse his cavalry and thus become a difficult target to chase. Eventually Smith and Wood gave up the futile pursuit and went off to Kolar to rendezvous with the Field Deputies and Mohammad Ali and prepare for the siege of Bangalore. This attempted attack at the pass of Budikote had once again seen Haidar's plans coming to naught. He had not been able to prevent a junction between the two British armies and once more had to retreat in the face of determined opposition. But as usual Kirmani and Punganuri described the encounter as a great victory for Haidar while De la Tour did not mention it at all. Kirmani gave a grandiloquent account of the events, saying that Haidar set up his artillery on the slopes of the hills and then sent his cavalry ahead to draw the British into the trap laid out. The British army took the bait and in the battle that followed all the Europeans were slain except 2 small boys. Punganuri was more circumspect by simply saying that Haidar suddenly attacked the English during their march and seized their artillery (a reference to the two cannons lost and regained by Wood) and then retired to Malur⁵²². These discrepancies underline the great care that must be exercised while comprehending the events of the war.

The Reconciliation between Haidar and Mir Raza Ali Khan

Instead of returning to Bangalore, Haidar proceeded north to Gurramkonda. This was mainly for two reasons. First, it was the fiefdom of his brother-in-law and erstwhile commander Mir Raza Ali Khan who had defected to the Marathas after the fall of Sira the previous year. Throughout the present year, especially after the retreat from the Carnatic, Haidar had been trying to woo Raza Ali Khan back to his fold along with his contingent of troops which would be valuable reinforcement for the Mysore army. To this end, his wife and the sister of

⁵²¹ Sinha, p. 132; Wilks, Vol. II, pp. 79-80.

⁵²² Kirmani, pp. 274-275; Punganuri, p. 18.

Raza Ali was making entreaties to her brother saying that he would be forgiven and reinstated as the *killedar* of Sira with additional holdings. But he had prevaricated on this point. So Haidar felt that a show of force near Gurramkonda would drive the message home. As he approached the fort, Raza Ali Khan tried to solicit aid from the Marathas and the Madras government, but both of them were too far to provide any relief. So, bereft of any succour, he opened the gates of the fort to Haidar and welcomed him. He was received into the latter's army as a cavalry commander⁵²³. The Mysore ruler's second objective was to lay waste to the territory to the north of the Gurramkonda which was the domain of his old enemy Murari Rao⁵²⁴. This would strike a serious blow to Rao's prestige and would perhaps force him to abandon the alliance with the British.

As always, De la Tour gives another version of the events trying to portray Haidar in a favourable light. According to him, when Smith was attacking Chikkaballapur, Mir Raza Ali Khan voluntarily came to meet Haidar in his camp. It seems that the former received ill-treatment from Madhava Rao and so was alienated from him. Seeing his brother-in-law's ill-fated campaign with the British practically at the gates of Mysore and the Nizam abandoning the alliance, Raza Khan was moved by remorse to take Haidar's side once again; and he had arrived with his contingent of cavalry and infantry. Of course, the Mysore ruler generously forgave him⁵²⁵. But this is contradicted by the account of Punganuri which more or less corroborates the sequence of events given earlier. According to him, Haidar set up camp at Madanapalle near Gurramkonda and sent Ali Zaman Khan to his brother-in-law with offers of forgiveness and assurances of friendship if he returned to his former loyalties. Mir Raza Ali Khan came to meet Haidar and the two were reconciled⁵²⁶. Curiously, there is no mention of the treachery of Haidar's brother-in-law and the subsequent reconciliation in the work of Kirmani. Presumably he wanted to avoid showing the family of his overlord in an embarrassing light. He even said that Tipu and his uncle Raza Khan were present during the fighting at Hoskote when clearly they were not as per other accounts⁵²⁷. Therefore it is certain that Mir Ali Raza Khan surrendered after Haidar's march to the fort of Gurramkonda. Overall it was a worthwhile detour as Haidar was able to augment his army with his brother-in-law's troops and raid the territory of Murari Rao. It must also be said that no disputes arose

⁵²³ Sinha, p. 132; Wilks, Vol. II, p. 80-81.

⁵²⁴ Wilks, p. 81.

⁵²⁵ M.M.D.L.T., pp. 238-239.

⁵²⁶ Punganuri, p. 19.

⁵²⁷ Kirmani, p. 280.

between the two brothers-in-law for the rest of Haidar's reign⁵²⁸. Haidar then returned to the environs of Hoskote and Kolar to keep a watch on the Madras Army and look for a favourable opportunity.

Renewed Diplomatic Negotiations

By the end of September 1768, Haidar's fortunes seemed to be very low indeed. He had lost all his territory in the Carnatic Payanghat as well as important fortresses in the Balaghat region. Now, a united army led by an able commander was about to lay siege to Bangalore, the most important fort of the kingdom of Mysore after the capital itself. This led the Madras government to believe that they had their foe on the mat and it was only a matter of time before they brought him to his knees. However, the actual situation was more complex. The Madras Army still had not been able to pin down Haidar. Even though several defeats had been inflicted on him, he was still able to muster a new army and renew the fight. Also even if he lost Bangalore and Srirangapatna, he could still fall back on his forts at Mangalore, Bidanur, Rayadurga and others from where he could continue the campaign. Also the advancing British army had around 1100 Europeans and 10,000 sepoy along with fifty cannons and cavalry belonging to Mohammad Ali's army. The Nawab of Arcot's troops were highly unreliable and thus were ineffective in actual combat with Haidar. The Madras Army was not numerous enough to garrison the captured forts as well as to lay siege to the strongholds in the interior. Due to this reason, the captured forts such as Krishnagiri, Dindigul and Mulbagal were entrusted to the Nawab's troops to garrison them⁵²⁹. This was also politically expedient as the conquest of Mysore was being conducted in the name of Mohammad Ali. With his swift cavalry, Haidar could still circle around the British troops and recapture the fortresses from their dispirited defenders. The fact was that if Haidar could not defeat the British troops, they couldn't defeat him either.

Smith also had the opinion that it was not going to be easy to defeat Haidar. The main aim of the Madras Army was to lay siege to Bangalore. But Smith and the Field Deputies had serious doubts about the feasibility of this plan. The fort itself was very well constructed with high bastions and wide ramparts and thick walls made of stone instead of mud. There was a deep ditch in front of the building behind which were a level area for easy visibility as well as

⁵²⁸ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 81.

⁵²⁹ Ibid.

a well-built glacis and with the cannons placed on the redoubts⁵³⁰. Also, Haidar had stocked the fort well with supplies as well as ammunition before leaving it in the charge of his uncle Ibrahim. In a letter to Madras, the Field Deputies said that “so long as Hyder remained in the field with so numerous an army, the attack on Bangalore would be too arduous an attempt and that he must be first be defeated before it could be undertaken with a prospect of success.”⁵³¹ Also, the British army did not have siege guns which would be essential to breach the walls. In his report to Madras, Smith estimated that there were 3,000 French-trained infantry in Bangalore as well as 7,000 irregulars; and that Haidar had 10,000 infantry and 7,000 cavalry as well as 20,000 irregulars with whom he could attack the Madras Army in the rear. He concluded, “All this could not have been vanquished by the threats of a half starved, ill recruited, ill supplied, harassed army.”⁵³² Wood and he urged the Council of Madras to negotiate with the foe.

This was the situation on the ground when Haidar sent renewed feelers for peace to the Madras government. During his retreat to Gurramkonda, Haidar sent tentative offers to Smith and his subordinate, Colonel Lang, who was in charge of the pursuit. When Lang halted at Punganuru for resupplying, Smith had joined him there and Haidar had no trouble in reaching Gurramkonda. Haidar’s *vakil* Narayana Rao came to the British camp at Punganuru offering the terms of his sovereign who found in Smith a sympathetic recipient. Haidar was prepared to compromise on his territory for a peace settlement. He offered to cede the territories in the Baramahal, and pay a sum of 10 lakhs of rupees, to the Madras government (but not to the Nawab of Arcot who he stated would not be a party to the negotiations) as reparations. But this failed to satisfy the Council of Madras which demanded the reimbursement of the entire costs of the war. Moreover, important forts on the frontier area like Krishnagiri, Shankaridurga and Dindigul had to be handed over as well as additional territory yielding revenue of 6 lakhs of rupees annually for the costs of garrisoning them. Also, Haidar would have to make territorial concessions in the Malabar to the East India Company as well as in the Balaghat region to Murari Rao. Finally, he would have to pay the tribute to the Nizam which the British had promised the Hyderabad ruler in case of their conquest of Mysore. In return for the acceptance of these terms, the Madras government would agree to a peace treaty and its troops would vacate Mysore territory⁵³³. These demands were nothing short of

⁵³⁰ Sinha, p. 133.

⁵³¹ *Orme MSS.*, vol. 71, pub. in Sinha, p. 133.

⁵³² Sinha, p. 133.

⁵³³ *Ibid*, p. 134; Sheikh Ali, p. 110; Wilks, pp. 81-82.

those demanded by a victor from the vanquished and so were unacceptable to Haidar. With the negotiations deadlocked, his emissary left the camp on October 3⁵³⁴. Haidar now felt that the Madras government had no intention of making a negotiated settlement and hence he decided to go on the offensive.

Haidar's Renewed Offensive Against the British

Haidar's first attack was against Mulbagal. It was the closest important fort to Gurramkonda and he had learnt that it was weakly held by a garrison of the Nawab's troops. Wilks said that John Call had given the fort to the troops of Arcot without the knowledge of Smith⁵³⁵. This could be true as Smith was mainly involved in the forward operations of the army instead of the mopping up operations. The taking of this fort would seriously threaten the lines of communication between Madras and the army in the field. Also, the retaking of this stronghold would send a powerful message to the Council of Madras. As the historian G.B. Malleson wrote, "Rarely have rapacity and extortion met with a prompter punishment. Driven to bay, the wild and untutored genius asserted itself. From the recovery of Mulbagal began the series of successes ending in the triumph of Haidar Ali."⁵³⁶ Also, the Madras Army was tired from its prolonged countrywide chase of Haidar lasting for more than a month and was recuperating in Kolar. In the last week of September, Haidar advanced directly on to the fort of Mulbagal and immediately captured it on October 2 with the garrison hardly putting up a fight⁵³⁷. De la Tour erroneously states that the fort was retaken by Makhdoom Ali several months earlier by infiltrating his soldiers in sepoy uniforms⁵³⁸. Here he confuses Makhdoom's earlier encounter with Smith's troops with Haidar's exploit. But it is clear from the battle reports and the other accounts that it was Haidar's exploit. On capturing the fort, Haidar left a garrison and then scoured the surrounding countryside with his cavalry while at the same time keeping an eye on the events at Mulbagal⁵³⁹.

The Battle of Mulbagal

On hearing about the fall of Mulbagal, the British commanders decided that this important fortress must recaptured at the earliest. As Lieutenant-Colonel Wood was nearest to this

⁵³⁴ Sinha, p. 134.

⁵³⁵ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 83.

⁵³⁶ Malleson, p. 221.

⁵³⁷ Sheikh Ali, p. 114; Sinha, pp. 134-135; Wilks, Vol. II, p. 83.

⁵³⁸ M.M.D.L.T., pp. 231-232.

⁵³⁹ Malleson, p. 221.

place, he was ordered to proceed with his detachment and recapture the fort. On October 3, Wood reached Mulbagal and set about carrying out his assigned task. He didn't expect Haidar himself to be in the vicinity, a misconception that would prove costly for him. He captured the lower fort and the town by dusk and at night tried to climb up the slope of the hill to reach the citadel. He was immediately beaten back under a hail of fire and rocks after suffering casualties in the attempt⁵⁴⁰. Foiled in his attempt, he set up camp in the town to try again the next day. However, on October 4 he observed light cavalry escorting what appeared to be a supply train go past the fort. Not knowing that Haidar himself was nearby, he saw an opportunity to replenish his supplies by capturing the convoy. Unwisely without sending a scouting detachment to investigate, Wood moved with two companies of sepoys and a single cannon to intercept the train. But this was merely a feint on Haidar's part. The cavalry train led the British officer further and further from the fort and three km away he noticed that he was about to be encircled by a strong cavalry force, which he estimated to number around 3000, and infantry⁵⁴¹.

Wood now realised that he had been lured into a trap and, putting his escort into a defensive formation, immediately galloped back to the fort to put his troops on the alert and get reinforcements. He returned with another 2 companies of sepoys and 1 gun to aid the troops in the field who had been surrounded by Haidar's cavalry. With some difficulty he managed to fight his way to reach the besieged troops with the reinforcements. But this limited force of 4 companies and two cannons amounting to around 400 men could not hold its ground for long. The only option was to retreat to the fort and to do this the tiny army would have to fight its way out of the cordon. Wood abandoned his cannons which were seized by Haidar's troops; and, by forming his men into an infantry square, proceeded to fight a rearguard action to reach the fort⁵⁴². At this point, Captain Matthews also joined the fray by attacking the Mysore cavalry in the flanks with his battalion which relieved some of the pressure on Wood. The former united with the latter to conduct a fighting retreat and managed to reach a small hill to the right nearby where they set up their positions. It is apparent that the infantry and artillery in the fort was insufficient to rescue them. Wilks gives a vivid account of the battle

⁵⁴⁰ *Orme MSS.*, vol. 71, pub. in Sinha, p. 135; Wilks, Vol. II, p. 83.

⁵⁴¹ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 83.

⁵⁴² Malleon, p. 222; Wilks, Vol. II, pp. 83-84.

where he said that the British troops took up positions behind the granite rocks on the hill on a ridge 300 yards wide and, using them as shields, kept up the fire from their guns⁵⁴³.

Haidar's troops showed far greater ability and resolution in this battle. In particular, his infantry advanced up the slope of the hill to clear out the Europeans from their vantage points. The battle degenerated into a confused melee where positions often changed hands between the two sides without either gaining a definite advantage. But slowly the superior numbers of the Mysore army began to overwhelm the defenders. Even Wilks gave a rare compliment to them by saying that "Hyder's guns were served with skill, spirit and decision."⁵⁴⁴ Also, Haidar's infantry conducted a bayonet charge to clear the opponents' positions; which suggests that they were led by French officers. His cavalry charged other positions over favourable ground and, most tellingly, his cannons had circled around the hill to the flanks and rear of the British positions where they kept up an enfilading fire on the British soldiers. All these manoeuvres suggest a very competent and resolute leadership. Slowly the British lines started to get narrower and narrower, and it seemed to be only a matter of time before the whole hill was overrun by Haidar's troops⁵⁴⁵.

But now the British resorted to the use of stratagem to extricate themselves from this sticky situation. Captain Brooke was in charge of the baggage at the fort of Mulbagal and, with his 4 companies, formed the last reserves of Wood's force. So far the fighting had not reached him as it had been concentrated on the hill. There were also a number of sick and wounded who had been left under his care; and this enterprising officer decided to resort to an extraordinary bluff. Along with his available troops, he roused every man on the sick list who was able to walk and formed a makeshift army out of them along with two spare cannons that had been left in the fort. With this force he advanced by a roundabout route to an elevated location on the left flank of the Mysore army without them noticing. He then loaded the cannons with grapeshot and fired into their midst. At the same time, he caused his army to shout out the name of Smith loudly⁵⁴⁶. This had the desired effect and both sides on the hill were tricked into thinking that a relief force under Smith had reached the town. This gave renewed hope to the defenders who fought with renewed vigour and Haidar immediately withdrew his army in

⁵⁴³Wilks, Vol. II, p. 84; Report of Smith to Madras dated October 9, pub. Wilson, pp. 258-262.

⁵⁴⁴Wilks, Vol. II, p. 85.

⁵⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid, pp. 86-87; Malleson, p. 222.

order to meet this new challenge and he scouted the countryside for signs of the approaching army⁵⁴⁷.

Thus the hill was clear of hostile soldiers when Captain Brooke joined Colonel Wood on the slope. The latter used the newfound respite to rearrange his troops in the best possible defensive position, that of several parallel lines facing down the slope in order to facilitate volley firing by muskets. Moreover, now he had two cannons and a not inconsiderable amount of ammunition to stand his ground; and these were kept in the centre. By now Haidar had discovered that he had been fooled and so came back to press his attack on the hill⁵⁴⁸. His cannons continued their bombardment till the powder was exhausted, and his cavalry made several fruitless charges up the hill which was now defended by skilled musketeers giving enfilading fire to the attacking soldiers, including one with Haidar himself in the lead. But by nightfall the position did not change and Haidar, having now suffered over 1000 casualties, withdrew some distance to regroup while Wood used the cover of darkness to withdraw to the protection of the town. The Madras Army officer was aware of his precarious state and immediately sent a messenger to Smith asking for reinforcements. In the meantime Haidar continued to hover with his cavalry on the outskirts of the town waiting for a favourable opportunity. When Smith arrived on the morning of October 7 after a day's march from Kolar, the Mysore sovereign prudently withdrew from the field⁵⁴⁹. Bereft of support, the citadel at Mulbagal also surrendered to the Madras Army. After taking stock of the situation the whole army returned to Kolar to recuperate.

This marked the end of the second siege of Mulbagal in the space of 1 year with the Madras Army remaining in control. But it had been a pyrrhic victory for Colonel Wood as he had had to suffer heavy casualties in battle. Thomas Palk said that the action involved 450 Europeans and 2000 sepoys and Haidar was obliged to retreat after 5 hours of battle leaving 2000 infantry, 100 horses and several elephants and camels. This seems an exaggeration as no elephants and camels are mentioned in the report to the Madras government. He gives the British casualties as 2 officers, Captains Fitzgerald and Mackay (not to be confused with Major Fitzgerald or the Field Deputy Mackay), 2 ensigns as well as 63 other ranks while 250 sepoys were killed and wounded⁵⁵⁰. Wilks gave the losses as 8 field officers and 229 other ranks while the records of the Madras government gave the casualty list as 20 Europeans

⁵⁴⁷ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 86; Letter from Smith to Madras dated October 9, 1768, pub. In Wilson, p. 261.

⁵⁴⁸ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 86-87; Wilson, p. 259.

⁵⁴⁹ Malleson, p. 222; Sinha, p. 136; Wilks, Vol. II, p. 87; Wilson, p. 261.

⁵⁵⁰ Letter from Thomas Palk to Robert Palk dated October 24, *Palk Manuscripts*, p. 87.

killed and 56 wounded while 28 sepoys were killed and 125 wounded⁵⁵¹. Colonel Wood went so far as to say that “I have only to remark that the enemy have behaved with a courage far beyond anything I could have expected from them, at times withstanding the charge of bayonets, and their horse in general more resolute than they have yet appeared, and in some instances desperately enterprising. Upon the whole it has been the most serious and warmest contest that Hyder has as yet supported, and nothing but the most steady and determined behaviour could have resisted them.”⁵⁵² Punganuri anachronistically places the battle of Mulbagal in November and said that many were killed on either side⁵⁵³. With its limited resources, the Madras Army on the field was hardly in a position to withstand such losses. On the other hand, Haidar had plenty of men and money available to make up for his losses. Thus Colonel Smith and Lieutenant-Colonel Wood were beginning to have serious doubts as to whether they would be victorious in the war.

Haidar now decided not to engage in frontal combat with the British soldiers in the future. This seems to have been due to a reappraisal of his position. He had faced the sepoys and their officers in many pitched battles for the duration of more than a year and more often than not had received the worst of the encounter. Also, he had a healthy respect for Colonel Smith whom he had been unable to defeat. He decided to resort to his usual tactics of cavalry raiding in order to wear down the British and agree to negotiate an agreement on his terms. So far this had proved very effective during the war in the fighting in the Carnatic as well as on the western coast against the Bombay Army by delaying and ultimately forcing back the opponents. The swift movements made by it were primarily the reason that Smith and Murari Rao had been unable to advance to Bangalore from Kolar as their supply convoys were under constant threat. Therefore, Haidar’s new strategy was to place his infantry soldiers in the fort garrisons in order to bolster their defences while he himself would carry fire and sword to the opposition with his cavalry. Also, his mobile army would be difficult for them to chase and pin down as they had no serviceable cavalry. So from now on, Haidar’s offensives would be mainly borne on horses.

Aftermath

After returning to Kolar, Smith had a meeting with the Field Deputies on October 9 where he outlined his concerns. There were that the field force of the Madras Army was too small to

⁵⁵¹ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 87; Proceedings of the Madras Government dated October 10, pub. In Wilson, p. 261.

⁵⁵² Wilson, p. 262.

⁵⁵³ Punganuri, p. 19.

undertake the proposed siege of Bangalore while Haidar's army remained at large; and so far they had been unable to pin him down in spite of repeatedly repelling his assaults. Therefore, at least another division would be needed in order to protect the flanks while Smith and Wood undertook the siege. The Field Deputies Call and Mackay were not in agreement with this proposition. Their contention was that Wood had found himself in a sticky situation in Mulbagal because Haidar had managed to stage a surprise attack and also the fort had remained in British hands. They stated that the siege could be prosecuted with the available personnel and also Haidar could be dealt with using flying columns i.e. lightly-armed and rapidly moving infantry columns. The sick and wounded would be sent to Venkatagiri and from there to the military station of Vellore so as not to slow down the progress of the army while at the same time obtaining fresh supplies of food and ammunition along the same route⁵⁵⁴. Smith broached this plan to his officers in the field and they agreed with it. But Smith recognised that one of the biggest hindrances on his army was the lethargic retinue of Mohammad Ali. In his report to Madras on October 11, he asked that the Nawab of Arcot return to the city⁵⁵⁵.

Now a fresh plan was drawn up. The two divisions of the army under their respective commanders would head north and try to engage Haidar in a single decisive battle. If they inflicted very heavy losses on him, his army would scatter and would not be able continue its raiding tactics for some time at least till he built up another army. Once this was accomplished, the siege of Bangalore could be conducted with ease as the blow would have damaged the morale of the Mysore soldiers. Keeping this in mind, Smith and Wood set out with their respective divisions on October 14 heading to the northwest in the hopes of intercepting Haidar⁵⁵⁶. But he always proved to be one step ahead of them. According to De la Tour, Haidar now divided his army into 3 sections, one under himself and the other two under his brothers-in-law Makhdoom Ali Khan and Mir Raza Ali Khan respectively⁵⁵⁷. These were to head in different directions. Makhdoom was told to go to the Carnatic Payanghat and conduct his operations there while Raza Ali Khan would head north into Murari Rao's territory to lay waste to the countryside. Haidar himself would attack the main British armies in the field by cutting off their supplies and exhausting them through fruitless chases.

⁵⁵⁴Letter from the Deputies to Madras dated October 14, *M.M.S.P.*, pub. in Sheikh Ali, p. 115; Wilks, pp. 87-88.

⁵⁵⁵ Sheikh Ali, p. 115.

⁵⁵⁶ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 89.

⁵⁵⁷ *M.M.D.L.T.*, pp. 239-240.

For the rest of the month of October, the Madras Army spent its time in the thankless pursuit of Haidar in the region between Kolar and Gooty to pin him down and bring him to a decisive battle. Each time the British soldiers pursued him, he retreated northwards to the territory of Murari Rao and joined in the depredations there. Then he would suddenly circle around the army and attack its supply train. Also the monsoon had set in by this time with its concomitant worries of disease and lack of transport. The net result was that the supplies of food and ammunition were being rapidly exhausted and fatigue was increasing among the troops⁵⁵⁸. Not surprisingly, De la Tour gloated over this, saying that the other European settlements such as French Pondicherry and Danish Tranquebar were delighted at the misery of the British though he does not go into details⁵⁵⁹. This necessitated further convoys from Madras to the main encampment at Kolar which were susceptible to attack by Makhdoom Ali and hence added to the already considerable financial strain on the Madras government. At length, by the end of October, the Council of Madras lost patience with the progress of the war. It laid the blame for the lack of substantial gains on the Field Deputies Call and Mackay, saying that they laid out unrealistic plans. It also felt that the divided command was the reason for the lack of success. Therefore on October 28, the Madras government dissolved the Committee of Field Deputies and ordered Call and Mackay to return to Fort St. George. Smith was given full powers of command and was asked to execute any plan as he saw fit⁵⁶⁰.

The Raid on Kolar and the Recall of Colonel Smith

It was during the manoeuvring and counter-manoeuving between Haidar and Smith that the former pulled off a masterstroke. Smith was chasing him in the environs of Devanahalli but Haidar outflanked the British army and directly laid siege to the fort of Kolar, the main British encampment in the region, on November 5. His main plan was to escalate the fort if any favourable opportunity offered itself as he was sure that the main British force was with Smith near Devanahalli. But a sizeable British contingent under Colonel Campbell, the original victor of Kolar, was still in the fort mainly to act as an escort to Mohammad Ali who was still residing there. When Haidar's small cannons, mainly dragged by swift oxen, opened up on the town outside the fort despite heavy rain, Campbell immediately set up his cannons in the ramparts of the fort and returned fire with skill and dexterity⁵⁶¹. Realising that taking the town was not feasible, Haidar resorted to his scorched earth tactics by raiding the

⁵⁵⁸ M.M.D.L.T., p. 240; Wilks, Vol. II, p. 88.

⁵⁵⁹ M.M.D.L.T., p. 239.

⁵⁶⁰ Board's minute dated October 28, *M.M.S.P.*, pub. in Sheikh Ali, p.115.

⁵⁶¹ Wilks, Vol. II, pp. 89-90.

surrounding countryside and burning the villages and crops in order to starve the garrison in the fort. On learning that the main base of Kolar was under attack Smith hurried to its relief. Haidar wisely decided against meeting Smith and withdrew on November 7 and the commander of the Madras Army reached the fort with a flying column the next day. This battle was also mentioned in Punganuri's memoirs where he said that Haidar opened his guns on the Nawab of Arcot at Kolar⁵⁶². As heavy thunderstorms were brewing, the Madras Army took nearly a week to build up its full strength in the fort.

This last attack on the regional headquarters seems to have broken the nerve of the Nawab of Arcot. Already he had to put up with many privations due to the incessant rains coupled with the cutting off of supply convoys by the Mysore army. Now the realization that his dreaded opponent was able to strike near him at will made him desperate to move to safer surroundings. He decided to move back to Madras with the Field Deputies who were getting ready to obey their orders to return. At this moment, the Madras government compounded the problems by recalling Smith to Fort St. George, ostensibly to give a firsthand report of the situation on the frontlines. Lieutenant-Colonel Wood, as the next senior officer, was to take acting command of the Madras Army divisions⁵⁶³. The Council of Madras had a high opinion of this officer because he had made several conquests in the Baramahal and the Carnatic-Payanghat such as Dharmapuri, Erode and Dindigul in the beginning of the year. They felt that their acquisitions would be safe in his hands. They did not seem to have a high opinion of Smith as he had let Haidar slip away several times and the campaign had remained essentially static since mid-July after the conquest of Kolar and Hoskote. According to them, "All honour is due to the conduct of one, and blame to the other" was the situation⁵⁶⁴. But Smith decided to comply with the orders as he saw an opportunity to make his case for further reinforcements, especially of the Bengal Army stationed in the Northern Circars. As a result, Nawab Mohammad Ali, the Field Deputies Call and Mackay, and Colonel Joseph Smith set out for Madras along with Murari Rao (though his army stayed back) on November 14⁵⁶⁵. Punganuri as usual gave the credit to his patron and said that Haidar frightened the Nawab and Smith to leave for Madras (which he called Chennapatnam) through his victories⁵⁶⁶.

⁵⁶² Punganuri, pp. 18-19.

⁵⁶³ Wilks, Vol. II, pp. 90-91.

⁵⁶⁴ Board's minutes on November 28, *M.M.S.P.*, pub. in Sheikh Ali, p. 115.

⁵⁶⁵ Sheikh Ali, p. 115; Sinha, p. 136, Wilks, Vol. II, pp. 90-92; Wilson, p. 262.

⁵⁶⁶ Punganuri, p. 19.

The replacement of Smith with Wood as the commander-in-chief of the Madras Army was a very unwise move on the part of the Madras government. Smith was by far the most experienced British commander who had directly borne the brunt of Haidar's attacks and who had defeated him consistently. Wood on the other hand seldom had had to face Haidar directly during the war so far. In fact, when he had encountered the Mysore ruler directly in a solo action for the first time at Mulbagal in October, he had been nearly overwhelmed. Most of Wood's victories were in the weakly garrisoned forts in the Carnatic and he had had to retreat from the Gajalahatti pass due to the constant threat of cavalry raids. Furthermore, Wood's army was understrength as a sizeable contingent had to be detached to escort Mohammad Ali and the others in their journey to Madras⁵⁶⁷. To make matters worse, there was the general feeling in the British camp that Smith had been unjustly shunted aside to make way for the new commander⁵⁶⁸. This exacerbated tensions between Wood and the other officers, which reduced the efficiency of the army. Thus by the end of the year 1768, the Madras Army was in a weakened state and without the services of its most able commander against a formidable opponent who had recently replenished his army. This can be said to mark the real turning point in the First Anglo-Mysore War. From this point in time onwards, the fortunes of the Madras Army would ebb while those of Haidar star would be on the ascendant.

Haidar's Attacks on Wood

The Council of Madras invested Lieutenant-Colonel Wood with full discretionary powers to undertake any action that he saw fit. It was made clear that his primary task was the subjugation of Haidar and the investment of Bangalore⁵⁶⁹. To achieve this, he received some minimal reinforcements from Smith's division including the battalion of Captain Cosby. Haidar seems to have breathed a sigh of relief on hearing that his most dangerous opponent Smith was no longer on the battlefield. He did not have a high opinion of Wood after observing his tactics at Mulbagal. The operations of the Mysore army became progressively more daring and larger in scale. No sooner had the retinue of Mohammad Ali and the others set out from Kolar that Haidar besieged the fort of Hosur on November 15. Wood immediately assembled his troops for its relief and set out the next day with a division of 700

⁵⁶⁷ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 92.

⁵⁶⁸ Ibid; Wilson, p. 262.

⁵⁶⁹ Letter from Madras to Wood dated November 21, *M.M.S.P.*, pub. in Sheikh Ali, p. 115.

Europeans and 4000 sepoys⁵⁷⁰. For greater effect, he took along with him two 18-pounder brass cannons in addition to the usual armament. These ponderous equipments would further slow down his army because of the lack of pack animals which required available horses or men to drag them. Finally after a day's march, he reached Bagalur on November 17 where he decided to store his 18-pounders as well as baggage and stores and other equipment which would delay his march. He was certain that Haidar was fully involved in the siege of Hosur and so would be susceptible to a night attack on his flanks and rear⁵⁷¹. The historian Wilks gave the most detailed account of the events that followed.

The British commander set out from Bagalur at 10 o' clock in the night and planned to reach the same night to attack his foe. But Haidar had already received intelligence about the plan and decided to lay an ambush for him. Wood hurried throughout the night in order to reach his quarry but could not arrive before dawn. The result was that his army was exhausted as well as disorganised by the overnight march and Haidar's army was waiting for it⁵⁷². The most opportune moment for the attack would be when the army was entering the fort as at time it would be very vulnerable. Also, as the fort's gates were open the situation would be ideal to capture it. Finding that the Mysore army had withdrawn, Wood proposed to rest his soldiers in the fort before venturing out again and the gates opened to receive him. At that moment Haidar's army attacked the British troops. His cavalry attacked Wood's detachment on the front and the flanks while the infantry, mostly irregulars, moved off towards Bagalur in order to raid the stores that had been placed there⁵⁷³. As this cache was in charge of a contingent of Mohammad Ali's cavalry under a British officer, Captain Alexander, it was expected to be an easy target. Wood's original plan had been to engage Haidar in a pitched battle where the superior gunnery of his soldiers would inflict heavy casualties on the opposing forces. But the immense Mysore army seemed to make this plan quite impracticable. Also, by 2 o' clock in the afternoon Wood heard of firing taking place at Bagalur⁵⁷⁴. This could potentially spell disaster for the Madras army if the vital supplies of food and ammunition fell into Haidar's hands as its fighting ability would be seriously impaired and it would be defenceless against attacks. So he was forced to beat a hasty retreat to his supply depot.

⁵⁷⁰ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 93.

⁵⁷¹ Ibid.

⁵⁷² Ibid, p. 94.

⁵⁷³ Sinha, p. 137; Wilks, Vol. II, p. 94.

⁵⁷⁴ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 94.

On seeing that Wood was retreating to Bagalur, Haidar decided to outflank him and thus head him off and reach the town first⁵⁷⁵. The town consisted of the mud fort and the town around it surrounded by mud walls. When Captain Alexander perceived the Mysore army approaching, he immediately started moving the stores and pack animals into the walls of the town. But Haidar, with his cavalry, moved quickly and invested the town. The soldiers and their commander realised that they could not make a stand and quickly took shelter in the fort and closed the door to the others, mainly the townspeople and the camp followers who were trying to enter. Thus Haidar had a field day in gaining booty and managed to capture all the cattle, camels and horses along with most of the stores as well as the two 18-pounders which had been lying outside the town walls before Wood returned⁵⁷⁶. The losses to the Madras Army were estimated at 2000 pack animals and an equal number of camp followers; but most serious was the loss of virtually all the stores and equipage of the soldiers that had been deposited there. He immediately sent messengers to Venkatagiri to request for replenishments; and so Major Thomas Fitzgerald was despatched with a convoy of 450 pack bullocks as succour on November 22⁵⁷⁷.

The Battle of Arlier

It certainly was not an auspicious start to Wood's command as his supply situation was now serious and so he would have to resort to interim arrangements till the convoy with fresh supplies arrived. For a few days he hovered between Hosur and Bagalur subsisting on the food that was available. But his movements were observed by Mysore scouts and reported to Haidar who made plans accordingly for a fresh attack. On receiving intelligence that Wood would be heading to the fort of Arlier near Bagalur on November 22, Haidar saw the perfect opportunity to ambush him. On the morning of that day, the British officer was oblivious of Haidar's movements and was heading to his destination when he suddenly spotted the cavalry approaching. He immediately assumed a defensive formation and commenced volley firing. However, the Mysore army used different tactics where instead of headlong cavalry charges, two batteries comprising of a total of 12 cannons were set up on elevations nearby and these commenced to pour fire on the British position⁵⁷⁸. To this was added musket fire from the infantry which were shielded behind the moving masses of cavalry which presented a difficult target for the British troops. Wood kept up firing from both his muskets and his

⁵⁷⁵ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 95; Wilson, p. 264.

⁵⁷⁶ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 95; Wilson, p. 264.

⁵⁷⁷ Report of Major Fitzgerald to Col. Smith dated November 24, pub. in Wilson, p. 264.

⁵⁷⁸ Wilks, Vol. II, pp. 97-98; Report of Major Fitzgerald, pub. in Wilson, p. 265.

cannons but made no move to advance or change his position. Probably, he was mindful of his earlier experiences in Mulbagal and Bagalur where he had nearly been overwhelmed by the Mysore troops.

This static scene of battle continued for the rest of the day with neither side trying to overwhelm the other. At nightfall, the Mysore cavalry seemed to retire and so Wood decided to retire to Bagalur. But soon after he set out, the Mysore infantry which had been hidden in the surrounding undergrowth started firing on him using their muskets, rockets and arrows causing his troops to fire in return. This situation continued throughout the night and impeded his movement every few metres. He assumed the a square formation with the remaining baggage and the horsemen of Murari Rao and Mohammad Ali in the middle and the British troops on the sides and continued his march throughout the night with continual harassment from the Mysore troops. The situation was the same the next morning and Wood was forced to seek cover in a nearby hill⁵⁷⁹. A detachment of the Mysore army attacked them there but was driven off after a furious bayonet charge by the British troops who then continued their march. But now Haidar had virtually surrounded Wood's division and commenced an attack on all sides with his infantry and cavalry. The latter immediately took up a defensive position on a hill and prepared to meet the charge. Haidar pressed his charge with the utmost severity and it seemed Wood was in danger of being overwhelmed again. But now the relief column under Major Fitzgerald arrived; and rather than face a reinforced British army Haidar again withdrew from the field⁵⁸⁰. Once again reinforcements in the nick of time prevented Wood from being overrun. The united column retreated to Kolar.

Thus ended the battle of Arlier. The official list of casualties said that the Madras Army lost 1 Captain, 6 junior officers, 20 European soldiers and around 200 sepoys⁵⁸¹. However, this figure seems to be an underestimation. Both Major Fitzgerald and the Madras government took a dim view of Wood's conduct of the battle. The former spoke deprecatingly of Wood in his report saying that he wasted much ammunition and effort to no avail and that he showed a lack of resolution by not trying to take the batteries of cannons near the fort of Arlier and that the Indian troops were very dispirited⁵⁸². This certainly suggests that the losses were far greater than the official report is willing to admit. Also, there is no mention of the casualties

⁵⁷⁹ Wilks, Vol. II, pp. 97-98.

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid; Sinha, p. 137.

⁵⁸¹ Wilson, p. 263.

⁵⁸² Ibid, pp. 263-265.

inflicted on the opposing side even as a face-saving gesture. So it is very likely that the Madras Army suffered a serious hammering at Arlier.

Historians like N.K. Sinha and Sheikh Ali described the battle of Arlier as a brilliant success for Haidar after the battle of Mulbagal⁵⁸³. However, this assessment does not take into account the fact that in both the battles Haidar had not been able to win an outright victory like he did at Kaveripattinam or Vaniyambadi the previous year. He had been able to inflict heavy losses on the British but he still hadn't stopped them or made them withdraw from his territory. It is probably for this reason that the non-British writers like De la Tour, Kirmani and Punganuri did not mention the battles of Mulbagal, Bagalur and Arlier except when Haidar won an outright victory. Thus the military stalemate between the two sides was still in place. The main difference between the opposing parties was that Haidar could make good his losses but the Madras Army could not afford to do so.

Aftermath of the Battle

Major Fitzgerald sent his highly critical report of Lieutenant-Colonel Wood to Colonel Smith who passed it on to the Madras government. In the interregnum, Wood made a few futile sorties against Haidar which again failed to reach their target. The government in turn ordered that Wood would be relieved of command which would go to the next senior officer, who was Colonel Lang. He assumed charge in the first week of December⁵⁸⁴. Wood was sent under arrest to Madras where he was court-martialled in late 1769 on the charges of misappropriation of stores as well as misconduct during the campaign and was dismissed from service. This is another indication that the Madras Army had suffered huge manpower and material losses during the campaign so far if its opinion of Wood had changed so drastically within the space of a month. Another important effect of the constant changing of commanders of the Madras Army was that confusion and disorientation became rife among the troops. On receiving news of this, Haidar now felt confident that the British would not make any new incursions in the direction of Bangalore. So the time seemed ripe for the retaking of his lost territories in the Carnatic-Payanghat as the majority of the Madras Army was concentrated in the Kolar area leaving the former territory undefended.

⁵⁸³ Sinha, p. 137; Sheikh Ali, p. 116.

⁵⁸⁴ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 100; Wilson, p. 267.

Operations in the Carnatic

At the end of September, Haidar had divested Faizullah Khan of the command of the fort of Bangalore after giving it to his uncle Ibrahim. This officer was now sent to Srirangapatna and beyond to raise new troops. Also by this time the withdrawn troops from the Malabar had arrived and had been given the necessary training and equipment and mounts in order to conduct effective field operations. In early November, Faizullah was given the command of 7000 cavalry and regular infantry as well as 10 cannons besides a number of irregular levies and was ordered to retake the captured territories in the Carnatic-Payanghat and attack the domains of the Nawab of Arcot⁵⁸⁵. Unlike most other commanders, he prepared a strategy to conduct his campaign by first carefully observing the British dispositions along the passes of Kaveripuram and Gajalahatti that had been left by Wood earlier that year. It was soon discovered that the outposts were weakly held with most of the British troops staying near the two aforementioned passes and the remaining forts in the Carnatic such as Coimbatore, Dindigul and Salem were garrisoned by companies of the Nawab's sepoys with a handful of Europeans in each fort. The bulk of the British troops of 9 and 6 companies were stationed in the forts overlooking Gajalahatti and Kaveripuram respectively⁵⁸⁶. The greatest weakness of these detachments was that they were isolated and thus would not be able to reinforce each other in case of an emergency. Compounding the problems further, the population in the countryside was antipathetic to Mohammad Ali⁵⁸⁷. Therefore, if the major outposts at the passes fell then the taking of the rest of the forts in the open country of the Carnatic was an easy matter.

Faizullah Khan commenced his campaign against Kaveripuram in the second week of November. The outpost resolutely defended itself against several attacks by the Mysore forces which were estimated by the sergeant commanding the advance post as "700 horse, 3000 regular infantry, 2000 irregular infantry and three 12-pounder guns" which were later reinforced by 4 additional cannons⁵⁸⁸. Several attacks had to take place before the outpost was overrun and levelled after heavy fighting. The officer in charge, Captain Faisan surrendered with his troops and was taken prisoner⁵⁸⁹. In the meantime, Faizullah, after

⁵⁸⁵Punganuri, p. 18; Wilks, Wilks, Vol. II, p. 103.

⁵⁸⁶ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 109; Return of the Troops stationed in the Coimbatore country, compiled and signed by Wood, pub. Wilson, p. 268.

⁵⁸⁷ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 103.

⁵⁸⁸ Report of Sergeant Hoskan, pub. Wilks, Vol. II, p. 104.

⁵⁸⁹ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 104.

leaving a detachment to carry on the siege of Kaveripuram, proceeded to assault Gajalahatti which withstood two attacks; but after the commandant Lieutenant Andrews was killed in the second attack, the outpost surrendered on November 19. It is probable that the attackers were less severe with the defeated party this time due to the lower casualties suffered by them. The troops guarding the other end of the pass, under Captain Orton, were in a forward position to meet the attackers and were forced to retreat to Satyamangalam and ultimately to Erode after expending their ammunition. Wilks castigates them for not showing initiative and blames it on the influence of Wood⁵⁹⁰. But it is unlikely that they could have done much in the isolated outposts without reinforcements of men and ammunition. Also, the men's morale was low due to lack of rations and money. Already the commanding officer at Gajalahatti had written to Madras in September that the men had not received their salaries for 3 months and were weak due to lack of food⁵⁹¹. Therefore, it was all the more remarkable that they put up resistance at all even in their weakened state and as such shows their sense of discipline. But it can be said that their morale must have weakened at the sight of the vast army of Mysore.

The taking of Coimbatore was a comparatively simple matter. With the rapid fall of the fortresses on the route to this place, the *killedar* decided to again defect to the ascendant side and made plans in concert with Faizullah to hand over the fort to the latter. On November 29, when the British soldiers in the fort were out on exercise the *killedar* closed the gates and massacred the remaining European personnel inside the fort including those who were in the hospital such as the commander Lieutenant McCutcheon and the paymaster Hamilton. Meanwhile Faizullah led his cavalry out of the countryside and captured the British outside the fort who couldn't defend themselves as blank ammunition was being used during the exercise⁵⁹². A similar subterfuge was used to capture Denaickancota which convinced the European officers that the Nawab's troops as well as the irregular levies were untrustworthy. Hence when the Mysore troops approached the vicinity the British soldiers and their regular sepoy would generally retreat to the next fort. This meant that several of the forts captured by Wood earlier in the year soon fell one by one and reverted to their original possession. The commander at Dharapuram, Captain Johnson, alone tried to put up resistance but was ultimately forced to retreat to Thiruchirappalli under heavy attack by Faizullah leaving him with the possession of the fort in early December. The commander at Sankaridurga, on hearing that treachery was rife within the fort, quickly evacuated it at night and took refuge in

⁵⁹⁰ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 104.

⁵⁹¹ Wilson, p. 270.

⁵⁹² Wilks, Vol. II, p. 105; Wilson, p. 270.

Travancore and then left by sea for Madras⁵⁹³. Strangely Faizullah's successful campaign finds only a small mention in Punganuri's memoirs and is ignored altogether by Kirmani and De la Tour. In fact, Punganuri only said that *Haibat Jung* (Faizullah) was sent by Haidar to recapture the countries of Dindigul, Madurai and Tinneveli and anachronistically gives the date as August⁵⁹⁴.

With the passes of Satyamangalam, Gajalahatti and Kaveripuram firmly in his hands, Faizullah gave his report to Haidar that the way to the rest of the Carnatic was now open. In a bold stroke, Haidar now decided to personally descend into the Baramahal at the head of his army. It was a strategic masterpiece as the British soldiers, who made up the bulk of the Madras Army, in the Kolar area had been left in a stalemated position and, considering their precarious supply state would not be able to return any time soon. In the meantime the Carnatic-Payanghat territory, including the environs of Madras, would remain open to attack because of the weak garrisons. The Madras Army would have to retreat by a circuitous route across Kolar, Venkatagiri and Krishnagiri in order to reach the territories of Madras. On December 6, Haidar entered the Carnatic by going east through the pass at Palakode and then south through the pass of Thopur in order to rendezvous with Faizullah⁵⁹⁵. It is at this point that the non-British sources again pick up the narrative which makes them useful to compare and corroborate with the British accounts. It is not surprising that the French and Mysore accounts are more detailed for this period as Haidar won several victories during this time.

Meanwhile at Kolar the Madras Army under the overall command of Colonel Lang, who had taken over after Wood was relieved, received intelligence of Haidar's movement and a flying column composed of the pick of the British soldiers was sent under Major Fitzgerald to intercept him. This detachment amounted to around 5000 troops with all the cavalry that had European officers and was lightly armed for the sake of speed⁵⁹⁶. But this was another futile effort as by now experience had shown that the army on foot with minimum cavalry could never hope to keep pace with Haidar's swift horses. Also, in order to reach their destination quickly, the soldiers would have to trudge for days over the steep mountain passes at a rapid pace which meant that they would be very fatigued by the time of fighting and thus would have lost their efficacy. But most seriously, the British army in the territory of Mysore under Colonel Lang was now seriously depleted as the best men had been despatched with

⁵⁹³ Wilks, Vol. II, pp. 104-105.

⁵⁹⁴ Punganuri, p. 18.

⁵⁹⁵ Punganuri, p. 18; Wilks, Vol. II, p. 106; Wilson, p. 267.

⁵⁹⁶ Sinha, p. 138; Wilks, Vol. II, p. 106.

Fitzgerald. This effectively put an end to further offensive operations in the region by the Madras Army. Thus, Lang retreated to Venkatagiri with an army composed of 370 Europeans, 900 sepoys and 11 cannons to recuperate and await new developments⁵⁹⁷. Again, this meant that his force was neutralised and unable to contribute to the war in any way and would only drain resources from Madras in terms of money and supplies.

With Haidar's arrival on the scene events started to proceed rapidly. One by one the remaining fortresses in the Carnatic began to surrender without so much as a fight, mostly because they were garrisoned with Mohammad Ali's troops who decided to switch sides. The dates of the surrender of the strongholds indicate the progress of Haidar throughout the Carnatic from the north to the southeast. Dharmapuri surrendered to Faizullah on December 6 after the arrival of Haidar; Tenkaraikottai fell the next day and Omalur went the same way on the 12th of the month⁵⁹⁸. According to Wilson, Haidar personally laid siege to Salem, the main fort in the Baramahal, on December 9 where the commander Captain Heyne decided to offer resistance along with his contingent of Topasses and 3 companies of sepoys belonging to the Nawab of Arcot⁵⁹⁹. The cannonade started the next day but was largely ineffective, only damaging the parapets. A European emissary from Haidar's army came under a flag of truce offering terms of surrender that the men in the fort would be allowed to go to Thiruchirappalli after giving up their arms. Heyne initially refused, but after sensing treachery within the garrison he agreed and surrendered on December 11. But the whole contingent were made prisoner⁶⁰⁰. However, there is no confirmation of these negotiations at Salem from other sources, either British or non-British. Even the records of Madras do not mention this; and Wilks states that Salem fell on December 15⁶⁰¹. Therefore, there are grounds to doubt the veracity of this incident. But it is fully in keeping with Haidar's character. At this stage, he could not allow the British garrisons to strengthen themselves by letting in more men.

Meanwhile Major Fitzgerald had come through the mountains and was advancing towards Salem. He had hoped to be able to come to its relief but received news of its capitulation on the way. He immediately changed his direction and went towards the Kaveri river in order to take stock of the situation. He had the option of going to either Erode or Thiruchirappalli. But

⁵⁹⁷ Select Committee Proceedings dated March 1769, p. 101, pub.in Sinha, p. 138; Wilks, Vol. II, p. 107.

⁵⁹⁸ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 108.

⁵⁹⁹ Wilson, pp. 268-269.

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁰¹ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 108.

the Madras government intimated to him of having sent reinforcements to Erode. So Fitzgerald felt that Erode fort was in no immediate danger and hence decided to go to the Thiruchirappalli where he could be assured of some rest and replenishment before combat could take place⁶⁰². But Haidar had received intelligence of his arrival in the Carnatic and, knowing him to be a capable officer with select men, avoided combat with him which led him to reach his destination unmolested⁶⁰³. But this also meant that Fitzgerald's force was effectively neutralised as it took no further part in the fighting. This indicates that the sovereign of Mysore possessed very good intelligence about the character of his opponents which indicates a very effective spy system. Thus Haidar had a clear field to pursue his operations without fear of interception from the British army on the field. He took Namakkal on December 17 and Karur on the 19th⁶⁰⁴. The capture of the latter place was particularly important from the prestige point of view as it had been lost to the British in 1761 during the Third Carnatic War⁶⁰⁵. At that time, Haidar had been fighting against Khande Rao and so could not relieve it.

The Battle of Karur

The next target was Erode. Captain Orton had retreated here with his troops in the first week of December after the fall of Satyamangalam. In the interregnum, he had been reinforced by a considerable detachment from Madras amounting to 6 companies of troops including 130 Europeans. However, this outpost was chronically short of supplies as the greater part from the surrounding countryside had been appropriated by Mohammad Ali's contingents when they were in charge of the fort. Therefore, on the morning of November 22, he sent Captain Nixon with a detachment of 70 Europeans (Wilks said 50 but Wilson was probably correct due to hindsight) and 200 sepoys and 2 cannons of a calibre of 3 pounds to fetch supplies from Karur, unaware that the fort had already fallen to Haidar⁶⁰⁶. Soon this detachment encountered the Mysore cavalry which resulted in a skirmish. But this attack was only a feint, the purpose of which was to lead the section forward to the waiting army of Haidar. This time the attack plan was also different. Instead of the normal circle thrown around the opposing forces by the cavalry which would then gradually contract, a number of well-placed cannons started bombarding Nixon's troops. Then Haidar emerged with a large contingent (which

⁶⁰² Wilks, Vol. II, p. 108.

⁶⁰³ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁴ Punganuri, p. 19; Wilks, Vol. II, p. 108; Wilson, p. 270.

⁶⁰⁵ Sheikh Ali, p. 123.

⁶⁰⁶ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 110; Wilson, p. 270.

Wilks put as 12,000 cavalry while De la Tour said 3000 cavalry) and surrounded the British soldiers⁶⁰⁷.

This time the strategy of the Mysore army yielded good results. This was mainly due to a change in tactics. The cavalry's main job was to hem in the British troops and prevent them from escaping while the artillery, comprising of 10-12 cannons, poured accurate fire into the British ranks. Even Wilks admits that the artillery was well-served. Gradually the British ranks thinned due to attrition and the survivors conducted a bayonet charge in an attempt to break through the cordon. Though the front gave way, the cavalry then charged the flanks and the rear of the infantry ranks. The result was that most of the British soldiers, including Nixon, were killed or wounded or made prisoners. Without doubt, the day resulted in a complete victory for Haidar. This is described as the battle of Karur by Kirmani and Punganuri because it took place near the fort of Karur. While Punganuri only briefly mentioned this battle, saying that Haidar ambushed the British between Erode and Karur and slew many of them, Kirmani gives a more detailed and much more fanciful description but does mention that the feint was used to draw the British contingent into the trap⁶⁰⁸. This time, De la Tour yielded to exaggeration, saying that Colonel Freschman, whom Wood had appointed as the commander of the captured forts in the Carnatic Payanghat in August, led the British attack with 4000 men including 600 Europeans⁶⁰⁹. This is certainly not true as this officer had retired sick to Madras and had appointed Captain Orton as the head of his contingent⁶¹⁰. But it certainly shows that Haidar had won a major victory on this day and it was the first time that he had actually defeated the Madras Army in pitched battle as the previous two times he had been robbed of victory at Mulbagal and Bagalur respectively. Even more important, the victory was mainly due to the excellent artillery performance which indicates that the gunners were French or trained by the French.

Haidar now proceeded to Erode and besieged the fort. He had received intelligence that Captain Robinson, who had been released after the fall of Vaniyambadi the previous November under the condition that he would not take part in the war, was serving in the garrison and decided to use this to his advantage. One of his British prisoners at Karur, Lieutenant Goreham, was sent to the fort under a flag of truce to invite Captain Orton to a meeting with Haidar on the promise of a safe-conduct. The commander of the fort accepted

⁶⁰⁷ M.M.D.L.T., p. 240; Wilks, Vol. II, p. 110.

⁶⁰⁸ Punganuri, p. 19; Kirmani, p. 275.

⁶⁰⁹ M.M.D.L.T., p. 240.

⁶¹⁰ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 109, Wilson, p. 271.

the invitation but then Haidar detained him saying that since Robinson had broken his pledge, there was no reason for the Mysore ruler to keep it. Orton was then forced to sign a document asking his troops to surrender which they did on December 25. Haidar had initially promised to release them after gaining possession of the fort but then again invoked the betrayal of Robinson and put the whole garrison in prison in Srirangapatna⁶¹¹. Thus, by the means of this subterfuge, Haidar captured the fort without suffering a single casualty which would have resulted under a more resolute commander. Captain Orton was tried by court-martial in 1769 and was cashiered from the army⁶¹².

Naturally, the above sequence of events is not given by De la Tour or the Mysorean chroniclers. But De la Tour did say that “Captain R----“ was captured in the battle of Karur by Makhdoom Ali and summarily hanged; and it was at Elvanisore that the commander, intoxicated by alcohol rode to Haidar’s camp and offered to surrender it to Haidar. Punganuri was as usual brief but Kirmani said that the officer at the fort, which he called Karur, was overawed by Haidar’s successes and chose to surrender⁶¹³. These inconsistencies indicate that the British version of events is correct. It is certainly in keeping with Haidar’s ruthless opportunism to turn the situation to his advantage. At this point, both Wilks and Wilson said that Haidar turned north and captured Kaveripuram⁶¹⁴. However, the capture of this particular fort at this juncture i.e. during the December campaign is suspect, not least because it is not mentioned in other sources. Also, it would have been more expedient to capture it on the way when Haidar Ali entered the Carnatic a few months earlier and it is unlikely that he would have again gone north from Erode to Kaveripuram which would have upset his timetable. Furthermore, the military despatch by Major Fitzgerald who was observing the battles said that the next fort to fall after Erode was Dindigul⁶¹⁵. Thus it can be reasonably stated that Haidar did not proceed to Kaveripuram after capturing Erode; if he ever did so it was before entering the Carnatic. The Mysore ruler then captured Dindigul on December 31; an important acquisition as it had been his *jagir* when he was rising in the service of Nanjaraja.

But Haidar was careful not to overplay his hand. Now that most of his territories had been regained, he decided to send peace feelers again. However, to keep up the pressure on the Madras government Faizullah Khan was sent to raid the environs of Madurai and

⁶¹¹ Wilks, Vol. II, pp. 111-112; Wilson, pp. 271-272.

⁶¹² Wilson, p. 272.

⁶¹³ M.M.D.L.T., pp. 241-242; Punganuri, p. 19; Kirmani, p. 275.

⁶¹⁴ Wilks, Vol. II, pp. 112-113; Wilson, p. 272.

⁶¹⁵ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 109.

Tinnevely⁶¹⁶. This also increased the pressure on Major Fitzgerald to protect his foraging parties and his patrols from attacks by the Mysore cavalry as Faizullah, from his base in Dindigul, could proceed north and make a sortie against Thiruchirappalli or, at short notice, proceed south and attack the undefended territories mentioned above. Haidar himself attacked the territories to the north of Thiruchirappalli, following a scorched earth policy by burning villages and farms, in order to isolate Fitzgerald and make the British more amenable to negotiations. Wilks said that the territory of Thanjavur was spared devastation on the payment of 4 lakhs of rupees but had to provide logistical support; while Punganuri said that Haidar spread devastation in the countryside and reached the fort where the Polygar made his submission with the tribute and a gift of 4 elephants⁶¹⁷. Punganuri is likely to be more correct in this matter as Haidar was raiding throughout the region. Therefore it seems that the environs of Thanjavur were raided but the fort itself was spared due to the capitulation. The result of this scorched earth policy was that the supply situation for the Madras Army remaining in the Carnatic became dire; and Wilks said that this forced Fitzgerald to retreat to Cuddalore⁶¹⁸. But this particular movement is not mentioned by Wilson or De la Tour or the military despatches of Madras and other sources. Also it is unlikely that Fitzgerald could have made a retreat of several hundred kilometres under constant attack by Haidar Ali's forces and then reached safely and it was not mentioned in the official despatches and histories. Therefore, in all likelihood he was confined to the region of Thiruchirappalli. And so, it was at this point in time during the campaign that Haidar sent his renewed feelers for negotiations with the Council of Madras.

Retrospect

Thus ended the eventful second year of the First Anglo-Mysore War. It had begun with great promise for the Madras government with the withdrawal of the Nizam from the war and the subsequent victories in the Carnatic and the Mysore territories. But soon faulty strategy and lack of adequate resources began to tell as the Madras Army became bogged down in incessant warfare against cavalry raiders. Also, by the middle of the year the tide began to turn with Haidar regaining the territories starting with Mangalore. The British offensive had run out of steam at Kolar; and then Haidar had outflanked the main Madras Army and recaptured the territories in the Carnatic. Though the British still held key forts like Kolar,

⁶¹⁶ Punganuri, p. 18; Wilks, Vol. II, p. 114.

⁶¹⁷ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 114.

⁶¹⁸ Ibid.

Krishnagiri and Venkatagiri, it was certain that their army would have to withdraw in order to protect the Madras territories. So at the end of 1768 the situation seemed similar to the one at the start of the year; but the main difference was that now the initiative had slipped out of the Madras government and had shifted to Haidar as he could attack at will close to the city while the British could not threaten him in any of his key possessions. Thus it was clear that his star was rising and the negotiations would have to take place on his terms.



Top: Attur fort which was captured by Lieutenant Colonel-Wood during his campaign in the Carnatic
Source: know-your-heritage.blogspot.com (accessed on March 1, 2016).

Bottom: The fort of Namakkal which surrendered to Wood. Source:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Namakkal_Fort#/media/File:Namakkal_Fort.jpg (accessed on March 1, 2016).

The forts were recaptured by the Mysore Army during Haidar Ali's offensive in the Carnatic.



Above: Artillery detachment of the British army, c. 1800. Source: W.Y. Carman and Michael Roffe, *The Royal Artillery*, Osprey Publishing House, Berkshire, 1973, p. 4.

The well-handled cannons of the British army wreaked havoc on the Mysore army.



Above: Rocket attack by the Mysore troops against the British army in the Second Anglo-Mysore War. Similar tactics were used in the First war as well. Source: Charles H. Hubbell (1898-1971) - nasa.gov, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=16264457> (accessed on February 22, 2016).



	British Army
	Mysore Army

Above: The map illustrates the events from August to December 1768.

Haidar Ali's course of action was as follows: 1.) Gurramkonda to Kolar. 2.) Kolar to Srirangapatna. 3.) Descending the Gajalahatti pass. 4.) Retaking of Coimbatore by Faizullah Khan. 5.) Erode 6.) Attur. 7.) The vicinity of Thanjavur.

The British army's course of action was as follows 1.) Engagements at Kolar. 2.) Retreat from Kolar to the Carnatic 3.) Pursuit of Haidar across the Carnatic.

Chapter VI

CONCLUSION

The First Anglo-Mysore War of 1767-1769 was a turning point in Indian history, being the first time that the British East India Company had received a setback at the hands of a local potentate since it had begun expanding its power in the mid-18th century. It was perhaps the only time that a British government capitulated to an Indian ruler accepting the peace treaty imposed by him. Its significance, however, lies in its aftermath. It marked the start of more than 30 years of warfare between the British and the state of Mysore which would prove to be a daunting obstacle to the expansion of British power in India. The British would not succeed in their plans till the defeat and death of Tipu Sultan and the capture of Mysore in 1799⁶⁸⁶. C.A. Bayly described the kingdom of Mysore as a Damocles Sword hovering over Madras⁶⁸⁷. The enquiry after the war in 1769 revealed the corruption, mismanagement and profligacy of the East India Company personnel⁶⁸⁸. The British parliament decided to reorganise the East India Company establishments in India. This led to the Regulating Act of 1773 and consequently the appointment of Warren Hastings as the Governor General to reform the administration and end corruption in the East India Company establishments in India⁶⁸⁹. In short, the First Anglo-Mysore War set off a chain reaction of events that would ultimately result in British hegemony over the subcontinent in the form of the Subsidiary Alliance system.

The War of 1767-1769 could be said to represent a microcosm of the political situation in 1700s. As was seen in the preceding chapters, the situation was very fluid and events occurred with perplexing rapidity. Rulers like the Nizam and the British would form alliances with each other only to break them to enter opposing camps, an all-too-common phenomenon in the 18th century. As was conventional at the time, the war ended with the opponents fighting to a standstill instead of to the finish, by signing a temporary peace treaty. Also, the conflict involved all the major powers in the Deccan - the Marathas and the Nizam as well as lesser powers like the Nawab of Arcot and the Polygars. Finally, the war could also be viewed as signifying a battle pitting the advanced European systems and technologies against

⁶⁸⁶ Bowen, *Business of Empire*, p. 4.

⁶⁸⁷ C.A. Bayly, p. 60.

⁶⁸⁸ John Marriott, *The Other Empire: Metropolis, India and Progress in the Colonial Imagination*, MUP, New York, 2003, p. 18; Dennis Judd, *The Lion and The Tiger: The Rise and Fall of the British Raj, 1600-1947*, OUP; New York, 2004, p. 47.

⁶⁸⁹ Davenport Adams, *Makers of British India*, p. 95; Judd, *The Lion and The Tiger*, p. 47.

traditional Indian methods of warfare. Yet as the results showed, the Military Revolution and technology themselves were insufficient to prevail over the older forms of warfare. This suggests that the conquest of the Indian subcontinent was by no means inevitable as indicated by colonial historians like Mark Wilks, James Mill and Sir John Kaye. The Indian rulers would try to keep pace by either adopting these methods or by developing countermeasures against them, thus ensuring that the ride would not be smooth for the Europeans. Thus, the First Anglo-Mysore War is archetypal of 18th century warfare in India and serves as a useful model for comparison with other conflicts in India and also overseas, where colonial expansion met with resistance from native powers.

Yet, the War of 1767-1769 remains the least studied of all the four Anglo-Mysore Wars. Though there have been many case studies of the Second, Third and Fourth Anglo-Mysore Wars, there has been no similar study on the First Anglo-Mysore War, apart from the primary records by contemporaries like Maistre De la Tour and Mark Wilks. The few scholarly studies of the war, such as the works of Mark Wilks and W.J. Wilson, have described it from the British point of view as part of a larger narrative, usually dwelling on British victories and glorifying the Madras Army. Later writers like John Fortescue, George Mangleson and Lewin Bowring have largely based their accounts of the conflict on the works of the aforementioned historians. Their accounts have been very brief and basically are a summary of British operations during the war - understandable as their writing was basically from the Colonial viewpoint, based on British records; seeking to justify British rule and deprecate that of its opponents. The fallout is that objectivity suffers, as there are no similar studies of the tactics and victories of Haidar Ali during the same conflict.

Surprisingly, no case study of either the war or of the military tactics employed by Haidar has emerged in Indian historiography. Historians of independent India have largely propagated the methodologies and conventions used by the British writers. Standard works on Haidar Ali - such as the writings of C. Hayavadana Rao, Narendra Krishna Sinha and B. Sheikh Ali, have relied extensively on the works of colonial historians and on the records of the Madras government and the East India Company to reconstruct the events of the war. Even modern historians like Kaushik Roy and Pradeep Barua devote greater attention to the later conflicts between Mysore and the British. The focus has been on his son Tipu Sultan who has been studied time and again overshadowing the father. This is to some extent understandable as the later Mysore Wars involved famous personalities like Eyre Coote, Charles Cornwallis and the

Marquess of Wellesley. Also, there is a perspective of seeing Tipu Sultan as an opponent of British colonialism.

Haidar Ali has been a relatively understudied figure in Indian historiography despite his towering status during the 18th century. A serious revision of this situation is needed, as it was he who raised Mysore to the status of a great power during that time. The history of India in general and of the Deccan in particular would remain incomplete without a thorough study of this remarkable personality. Of his campaigns, the First Anglo-Mysore War is a particularly fascinating subject as he was pitted against a major European power for the first time and yet managed to emerge victorious. Also, his considerable military and political talents were utilised to the maximum during this campaign. Even the British writers, who were opposed to him, grudgingly recognized his qualities as a soldier. William Fullarton said that Haidar possessed a 'superior genius' which enabled him to attack the vulnerable positions of the British⁶⁹⁰. In his assessment, Mark Wilks said that "In action Hyder was cool and deliberate, but enterprising and brave when the occasion demanded."⁶⁹¹ He also went on to say "Hyder of all Mussalman princes is most tolerant."⁶⁹² Davenport Adams said that Haidar was a "wily and daring foe" and calls his attack on Madras as a "brilliant *coup-de-main*"⁶⁹³. More recently, the writer Richard Gott said "Haidar's triumph was considerable. He had fought successive British armies to a standstill, and secured a breathing space of his own. A pattern of Mysore resistance to British rule had been established. It would continue under father and son until the end of the century, with Tipu's final defeat and death at Seringapatam in 1799"⁶⁹⁴. As most of what has been written on the war has been from the British perspective, a version from other points of view is necessary. In addition, this particular campaign is of great interest for the military historian as well as the political scientist as it involved significant military and political manoeuvring among all the sides involved.

An Analysis of the Conduct of the War of 1767-1769

Most British writers such as Wilks and Wilson, as well as Indian historians like N.K. Sinha and Sheikh Ali, focus on the weaknesses of the British army rather than on the strengths of its opponent. Wilks and Wilson lay the blame for the defeat at the feet of the Council of Madras.

⁶⁹⁰ Fullarton, *A View of English Interests*, p.16.

⁶⁹¹ Wilks, Vol. III, p. 456.

⁶⁹² Ibid.

⁶⁹³ Davenport Adams, *Makers of British India*, pp. 94-95.

⁶⁹⁴ Richard Gott, *Britain's Empire: Resistance, Repression and Revolt*, Verso, London, 2011, p. 48.

The Council appointed the Field Deputies - who set unrealistic goals for the army commanders (such as Smith), and then overruled sound military advice – for instance, Smith advised against retaining a full division as their escort – advice that was ignored, ultimately depleting the fighting strength of the army. Wilson also blames civilian contractors who embezzled the money released for procuring supplies for the British soldiers - delivering inadequate and inferior provisions and insufficient pack animals for transport. De la Tour also subscribes to this view⁶⁹⁵. Modern historians such as Sinha and Sheikh Ali maintain a slightly different view. Instead of putting the onus on the Madras government, they concur with the contemporary battle reports that the lack of cavalry was a major factor in weakening the British army's ability to force a decisive victory on Haidar, thus allowing him to get away to fight another day⁶⁹⁶. Also, they make much of the discipline and firepower of the European armies and the leadership of commanders like Smith but maintain that Haidar was a match for other officers like Wood and Fitzgerald. Thus, according to them, the organizational flaws of the Madras Army were more to blame for the defeat rather than the faulty government policies.

However, this gives only one side of the story. The fact that Haidar himself showed outstanding tactical leadership is often ignored by historians. He had incorporated infantry and artillery elements that had been trained under European commanders, and though they had been found wanting in several encounters, they had performed creditably in battles like those of Kaveripattinam and Karur. The testimony of Captain Matthews after the battle of Mulbagal said that "I never saw black troops behave so bravely as Haider's, all his foot were led on by Europeans."⁶⁹⁷ In addition, with his manoeuvrings, Haidar was able to overcome several British commanders – including Wood, Lang and Fitzgerald - and even inflict defeats on some of them. Though much is made of his repeated repulses at the hands of Smith, it cannot be doubted that the latter was also a very able commander who was able to match Haidar; and that is why a mutual respect developed between them. The fact remains, however, that Smith was never able to defeat Haidar completely. After each reverse - such as that at Changama, Thiruvannamalai or Mulbagal, Haidar was able to retreat in an orderly manner, thus being able to save as much of his army as possible, which suggests great

⁶⁹⁵ M.M.D.L.T., pp. 166-167; Wilson, p. 277.

⁶⁹⁶ Sheikh Ali, pp. 137-138; Sinha, pp. 143-144.

⁶⁹⁷ Sinha, p. 143.

organisational ability. A remarkable tactical and logistic feat was the last manoeuvre, in which he was able to draw the Madras Army south and then outflank it to reach Madras.

Much has been made of the lack of cavalry in the Madras Army. However, this is again a specious argument. Even the Marathas with their vast bodies of cavalry could only inflict tactical defeats on Haidar and were never able to overwhelm him. Indeed, it took a cavalry commander of genius like Madhava Rao to defeat Haidar, and that is probably why the Peshwa conducted his Mysore campaigns in person instead of delegating it to his subordinate commanders. In order to accomplish the goals that the Madras government had in mind, it would take a cavalry numbering in the tens of thousands; and it could only be done by greatly diminishing the infantry, as otherwise the large army would be unmanageable. It was impossible for the East India Company to build up a cavalry on that scale with the resources on hand. Even then there was no guarantee that Haidar could be defeated as he was a master at tactical manoeuvring. It would take a highly coordinated attack by very skilled commanders of both infantry and cavalry to overcome him.

The historian C.A. Bayly put forward a theory that the Indian powers like Mysore and the Marathas lacked access to the sea and were forced to remain land powers occupying increasingly unproductive land. Hence their military power diminished⁶⁹⁸. But this does not take into account the fact that Mysore had extensive trading relations with Europe and the Middle East and so never suffered a want of revenue to augment its military capabilities. If Haidar lost money on one campaign, he would make it up through the gains in plunder and tribute in another campaign. This is illustrated in his campaign against the Nairs in Malabar after his failed efforts against the Marathas. The trade and revenue systems of Mysore were still flourishing even at the time of the death of Tipu Sultan in 1799.

One very important aspect of Haidar's military - his excellent espionage system - has been overlooked. He had information on the characters and abilities of his opponents, particularly in the Madras Army. This is evidenced in the fact that he would avoid encounters with Smith while attacking other commanders like Wood or Orton. He also knew when and where the logistical supply trains would be arriving and was able to send his troops to attack them and weaken the British army. His light cavalry scouts would be roving throughout the countryside

⁶⁹⁸ C.A. Bayly, p. 5.

gathering intelligence and capture the opposing scouts in order to cut off the opponents' sources of information. This was amply illustrated in his manoeuvres in the Carnatic where he kept himself updated about the movements of Smith and Lang – hence being able to keep one step ahead of them. Importantly, on arriving at the gates of Madras, Haidar had demanded a meeting with Du Pre knowing that this Council Member was amenable to negotiations and the cessation of hostilities.

Keeping in mind Haidar's abilities as described above, it is highly unlikely that any single factor could have in isolation caused the defeat of Haidar. Like in the case of Napoleon, it would require a synchronized attack by several powers coordinating to overcome a military commander of this calibre. This was again proved in the Second Anglo-Mysore War when the combined armies of Bengal, Bombay and Madras attacked the forces of Mysore and once again had to settle for peace negotiations which restored the status quo ante. The situation changed only after the arrival of Cornwallis and the start of the Third Anglo-Mysore War when the Governor-General built up a working alliance with the Marathas and the Nizam to attack Mysore simultaneously from 3 directions which led to the defeat of Haidar's son Tipu Sultan and the partition of his kingdom. The political and diplomatic isolation of Mysore during this war meant that the kingdom did not have the resources to meet a greatly augmented hostile combination arrayed against it. However, it is unlikely that such a combination would have occurred in Haidar's time as the astute politician in him would have resorted to diplomacy and bribery to break the coalition.

A study of Haidar Ali as a tactician and strategist

The conventional thought among historians and the general populace is that great commanders are 'necessary to fight great battles'⁶⁹⁹. This subscribes to Carl von Clausewitz's theory of the 'genius for war.'⁷⁰⁰ In the same way, Haidar Ali displayed remarkable talent as a soldier and a diplomat, which enabled him to expand his de-facto kingdom and climb into the ranks of the major powers in India at that time. But a thorough study of his tactics reveals a much more complex picture. Haidar is generally credited as the first Indian ruler to incorporate findings of the European Military Revolution into his army. However, this argument is incomplete. Haidar had no doubt been impressed by the discipline shown by French troops in the time of Dupleix, leading to the idea of enlisting them in his army. He

⁶⁹⁹ Kaushik Roy, 'Mars in Indian History', *Studies in History*, 16, 2, n.s. 2000, p. 261.

⁷⁰⁰ Ibid.

also had a factory set up to manufacture cannons and muskets. Yet, there was a major flaw in his strategic thinking. The French and other mercenaries he enlisted had to raise their own corps of troops to serve in his army. Even the grenadier regiment that was set up in 1763 was raised by European officers, and the soldiers answered only to their immediate superiors. Haidar doesn't seem to have realised the merit of the wholesale training of his troops in the European style of warfare. Mercenaries who came to his standard like Maistre De la Tour and Eloy Joze Peixoto had to either bring their own detachments with them or raise them on their own from the levies of the countryside⁷⁰¹. The result was that the troops trained in western warfare remained small; the grenadier detachment never amounted to more than 5000 troops which was too small a number to make a real difference.

Haidar also seems to have been haphazard in assessing the quality of the freebooters who flocked to his banner. De la Tour recounts an incident where the Mysore ruler, while in Coimbatore after his conquest of the Malabar, sent his confidante Shama Rao to recruit Maratha horsemen⁷⁰². This official - being an accountant with little military experience, took over a year to fulfil his commission, returning with 4000 cavalry of which less than 800 horses were serviceable. As Haidar had already advanced money for the purpose, he had lost considerable time and resources in this fruitless pursuit⁷⁰³. This incident shows that Haidar did not have the insight to select men of capacity for administrative and military purposes. This is further buttressed by the experience of the clerk Stuart whom Haidar tried to impress into military service despite the former's lack of ability and experience⁷⁰⁴. This lack of judgement and supervision in the selection of western troops probably accounts for their being ineffective against Haidar's main enemies, the Marathas and the British as exemplified by the wholesale desertion of his French cavalry to Smith's forces in December 1767. It can also be surmised that the number of cannons and muskets manufactured in Haidar's foundries was not sufficient to have an impact on the battlefield. This is seen by his efforts to buy guns and cannons from the Bombay government as well as the Portuguese in the run up to the War of 1767-1769. Also, Haidar does not seem to have used the tactic of combining the artillery with the infantry in order to provide a steady cannon fire as the troops advanced. Usually, his cannons would fire their complete volleys from fixed positions after which the infantry would

⁷⁰¹ Nikiles Guha, pp. 62-63.

⁷⁰² M.M.D.L.T., pp. 80-81.

⁷⁰³ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁴ Orme, *Mr. Stuart's Travels in Coromandel and Dekan 1764*, published in Brittlebank, *Tipu Sultan's Search for Legitimacy*, p. 21.

charge. The advance of the guns with the footsoldiers would have made their task easier. Also, moving the cannons with the infantry would have made them less susceptible to be captured by the opposing forces.

It is worthwhile trying to compare Haidar's attempts to modernise his army with those of two other rulers after him who attempted a similar feat viz. Mahadaji Scindia of Gwalior and Ranjit Singh of Punjab. Scindia appointed a French mercenary named Benoit de Boigne to overhaul his army⁷⁰⁵. De Boigne not only created a regular corps of infantry called *Fauj-e-Hind* to supplement the traditional Maratha cavalry but also set up a foundry to manufacture state-of-the-art cannon⁷⁰⁶. Though even here the regular troops and artillery cannot have been more than several thousand, they were effectively utilised in conjunction with the traditional Maratha horse to overrun several areas of north India. De Boigne was an effective commander and he paid his troops regularly and saw to it that there were no malpractices in the disbursement of the men's salaries which led to the troops' increased loyalties⁷⁰⁷. The cannons produced were of such good quality and handled so well that even the British government in Calcutta was wary of facing this army. In fact, Arthur Wellesley appropriated these cannons after defeating the Marathas at the battle of Assaye in the Second Maratha War. Thus Mahadaji Scindia seems to have had considerably greater success in implementing the modernization of his army, mainly due to the appointment of the right person to the right position. The empire of the Scindias collapsed only after his death due to the ineffective leadership of his successor Daulat Rao Scindia.

An even more effective modernization was carried out by Ranjit Singh on his army, the *Khalsa*. He appointed several veterans of the Napoleonic wars such as Paolo Avitabile and Jean-Baptiste Ventura to train his troops in the European style of warfare as well as to set up foundries for the manufacture of weapons⁷⁰⁸. Ranjit Singh, unlike other Indian rulers, trained the bulk of his army on the new weapons and tactics. The key to his success was that he had his officers as well as subalterns trained in the new European tactics who could then raise their own units drilled in the same manner. The result was the creation of a vast army with a highly-trained officer corps that was not only able to conquer large swathes of southern Afghanistan, eastern Khorasan and Kashmir but also to keep other powers at bay⁷⁰⁹. So

⁷⁰⁵ Kaushik Roy, *Mars in Indian History*, p. 262.

⁷⁰⁶ Pradeep P. Barua, *The State at War in South Asia*, Thomson-Shore Inc., 2005, p. 93.

⁷⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁸ Ibid, p. 105; Roy, p. 262.

⁷⁰⁹ Barua, p. 105.

formidable was the reputation of his army that not even the British dared to antagonise him during his reign and studiously adhered to their agreements with the kingdom of the Punjab. Similar to the Scindia kingdom, the British moved against the Sikh empire only after it had been weakened by internecine strife after the death of Ranjit Singh.

That Mahadaji Scindia and Ranjit Singh were able to successfully adapt the Military Revolution to their armies suggests a deep-seated ability to discern the necessary talent and then utilise it effectively. Haidar Ali seems to have shown a lack of such foresight which also may account for the fact that no mercenary commander, European or other, was able to rise to renown in his army. Unlike Scindia who could boast of Benoit de Boigne and Ranjit Singh who could take pride in Avitabile and Ventura, no European mercenary commander in the army of either Haidar or his son Tipu is recorded as having achieved a major victory with the troops they commanded in any of the campaigns conducted by the two rulers.

These organizational shortcomings were a major drawback in Haidar Ali's administration. It was mainly due to these lacunae that he was unable to establish an orderly, tight-knit empire. As was seen during the campaigns of 1767-1769, often his commanders and *killedars*, including his brother-in-law Mir Raza Ali Khan in Sira, defected to the opponents' side. Most of the triumphs in his career - be they Doddaballapur, Bidanur, Malabar or Madras, were achieved when Haidar Ali was personally leading the army. Furthermore, during the Anglo-Mysore War, most of his subordinate commanders, with the possible exception of Makhdoom Ali Khan, were found to be wanting. Hence, the Marathas and the British had a relatively easy conquest till Haidar himself took the field. This definitely points to his failure to establish a cohesive, well-trained officer corps for the army, regardless of the troops being European or Indian. Most of Haidar's commanders like Makhdoom and Raza Ali Khan were his relatives and hence he appointed them to high ranks, notwithstanding their loyalty or ability.

Haidar's failure to establish a standard administration seems to be the reason for the short life of his empire. After conquering areas like the Malabar, Coorg or the Carnatic, he did not seem to have put up a sound officialdom in charge of the new acquisitions. As a result, after his return to his capital, the conquered areas rose up in revolt against the occupying forces which usually required Haidar's recurring presence in order to quell the insurrections. This indicates a lack of strategic vision in Haidar as compared to other empire builders like Akbar, Shivaji or Ranjit Singh. Hence, Haidar Ali was a brilliant tactician as his campaigns of the

Malabar and Carnatic show but he lacked the strategic vision to exploit those victories for lasting gains. One unique feature of Haidar seems to have been that he always produced his best plans when he was cornered. This was in evidence when he was fighting against Khande Rao or when he was cornered by the British forces. This suggests a propensity for reaction rather than for taking the initiative to nip the problem in the bud.

A comparison can be made of the military techniques of Haidar Ali with those of his son Tipu Sultan who succeeded him. Historians like Kaushik Roy and Pradeep Barua suggest that the latter promoted greater westernisation of the army in terms of weapons and tactics by having Europeans train the soldiers of Mysore. However, this is not borne out by evidence. Tipu certainly created a more centralised army consisting primarily of infantry, appointing salaried commanders in charge of fixed detachments of troops comprising of regiments (*cushoons*) organised into companies (*juqs*)⁷¹⁰. The army was called the *jaish* and the officers bore Persian titles like *risaldar* and used words of command in the same language - which indicates that the bulk of the army relied on traditional tactics. Also, the number of French mercenaries in his army from the 1790s amounted to not more than 20 Europeans and 200 of their troops⁷¹¹. By the time of his death in 1799, only a few Europeans remained in the Mysore army. This suggests even lesser incorporation of western techniques as the number of mercenaries is too few to have trained any meaningful number of soldiers. The only innovations Tipu seems to have introduced were in the field of rocketry by improving the design. Thus, Haidar's son seems to have been even less successful in adopting the Military Revolution than the father. He also seems to have lacked his father's keen diplomatic abilities as also the ability to build a strong and flexible intelligence network. This explains his failures against the Marathas and the British in which he lost several territories gained by Haidar during the early years of his rule. Unlike his father, he could not prevent the united attack of the Marathas, the Nizam and the British on Mysore which ultimately resulted in his defeat and death. Thus the opinions of historians like Mark Wilks and Hayavadana Rao seem to be correct when they claim that Tipu lacked the judgemental capacity of his father.

Thus, the picture emerges of Haidar Ali as the prime example of the 18th century Indian warlord - one ruling from the saddle, always on the move and ruthlessly exploiting the opportunities that came in his way. He had a complex personality; he was capable of great cruelty as demonstrated in his campaigns against the Polygars and in Malabar, but at the same

⁷¹⁰ Barua, pp. 86-87.

⁷¹¹ Ibid.

time he was capable of extraordinary felicity as shown in requesting a meeting with Colonel Joseph Smith and then displaying his portrait in the palace at Srirangapatna. Contrary to the opinions of modern historians who say that he introduced westernization of the army, he relied on traditional methods of warfare to which he was accustomed and employed Europeans only as auxiliaries. Therefore, his cavalry corps and irregular levies vastly outnumbered his conventional infantry and artillery. However, he more than compensated with his brilliant tactical abilities which included setting up a very effective intelligence network and maintaining a personal corps of select horsemen. Hence, Haidar Ali certainly can be called one of the outstanding cavalry commanders of the 18th century. He expanded Mysore – developing one of the most powerful states in India at that time, on the basis of sheer personal ability. Most of his conquests took place with him at the helm. Nevertheless, his policies and actions set in motion a process that wouldn't enhance the longevity of his dynasty unless improved upon. He left a vast but loosely-organised kingdom for his successor Tipu, whose inability to deal with the problems that arose led to the British domination of Mysore and with it the whole of peninsular India.

Observations on the First Anglo-Mysore War

In brief, the following observations can be made on the First Anglo-Mysore War:

- As a rule, Haidar Ali did not initiate hostilities with the European powers in India.
- The First Anglo-Mysore War was forced on Haidar by a hostile coalition of powers which made him take retaliatory action.
- In the first phase of the War, there was an invasion of the territories of Mysore by the coalition of the Marathas, the Nizam and the British.
- The next phase saw Haidar Ali launching a counteroffensive against the territories of the Madras government. Fortunes varied on both sides during this phase.
- The final phase culminated in the siege of Madras by Haidar which led to the signing of the Treaty of Madras, which was more of a truce than an actual peace treaty.
- At this point in time, Haidar regarded Peshwa Madhava Rao I as his main opponent.
- Haidar possessed a very good intelligence network that kept him informed of the individual commanders and officers of the Madras Army, and hence he knew when to attack and when to withdraw from the field.
- The main striking force of the Mysore army remained the light cavalry which was used for skirmishing and attacking behind the frontlines.

- Haidar's military innovations and the attempted westernization of his army did not yield the desired results as he failed to inflict any decisive defeat on either the Marathas or the British.

Summary

To sum up the present research study, the first chapter covers important aspects like the statement of the research problem, the objectives of the study, the limitations of the study conducted, the research methodology used and the review of literature as well as the scheme of chapterization. The second chapter traces the rise of Haidar Ali to become the ruler of Mysore and his interactions with the neighbouring potentates such as the Marathas and the Nizam as well as the British in Madras. It covers the background leading up to the First Anglo-Mysore War of 1767-1769 and the events and the complex circumstances leading to the conflict. The chapter also has a section examining the military technology of the era as well as the strengths and weaknesses of each side along with the equipment used and a geographical description of the theatre of the war.

The third chapter covers the first year of the war from January to December 1767. It starts with the invasion of Mysore territories by an alliance of the Marathas, the Nizam and the British and Haidar's reaction to them. Also, it covers the various military tactics and manoeuvres and counter-manoevres of the opposing armies on the field. It describes Haidar breaking the hostile alliance and then allying with the Nizam to invade the Carnatic-Payanghat. Finally, the chapter concludes with Haidar's withdrawal to Mysore territories with an analysis of the events that occurred throughout the year and an examination of the positions of each of the parties involved. Next, the fourth chapter covers the second year of the war from January to December 1768 when the campaigning occurred in two stages. The first stage started at the beginning of the year with the renewed invasion of the territories of Mysore and Hyderabad by the British armies and the signing of a peace treaty between the Nizam and the British, and then continued with the British seizure of Haidar's territories in the Carnatic and the offensive across the junction of the Eastern and Western Ghats. The second stage witnessed the counter-offensive of Haidar into the Carnatic and his recapture of the territories. The fourth chapter includes an analysis of the events of the year.

The fifth chapter covers the last stage of the war i.e. the period from January to April 1769. It goes through the breakdown of peace negotiations and the renewal of hostilities between Haidar and the Madras Army in the Carnatic with the associated movements and counter

movements. It also describes the siege of Madras which led to the cessation of hostilities and the signing of the Treaty of Madras. The treaty is examined in detail and the aftermath of the war is described and analysed. The sixth and last chapter is the concluding part of the research study. It summarises the findings of the present research study and then analyses the war from several perspectives and measures its impact. It also analyses the conduct of the war in the context of India in the eighteenth century. It compares Haidar Ali with the other contemporary rulers and analyses his victories and his failures. It concludes with a descriptive analysis of Haidar as a soldier and a ruler.

Thus, it can be seen that the Anglo-Mysore War of 1767-1769 was a momentous event in the history of India. But for an event of such magnitude and importance, it has attracted little attention from historians. Thus the present study is an endeavour to fill the lacunae in the historiography of the First Anglo-Mysore War of 1767-1769.

Chapter V

THE CLOSING PHASE OF THE WAR: PEACE NEGOTIATIONS, RESUMPTION OF HOSTILITIES AND THE TREATY OF MADRAS

By the beginning of 1769, Haidar was in a strong position to dictate terms to Madras. His army had regained control of the Carnatic-Payanghat and was poised to make further gains in the territory. The Madras Army's offensive had bogged down and it was unable to move forward against him. So he felt confident that he could propose peace negotiations from a position of strength. He also did not want to press the Madras government too hard as this could alienate the British and would lead them to use all their resources against him and might even ally with his enemies, the Marathas. This was the normal procedure adopted by the Indian rulers at this time. If the adversary seemed too strong to defeat in a short duration, then usually bribes and concessions were offered; and if those did not succeed then threatening gestures were made in order to force a settlement on it with war as the next resort. The wars were seldom fought to the finish due to the huge drain of resources on both sides. It was with this background that Haidar requested an empowered negotiator from Madras visit his camp to discuss the terms of ending the hostilities.

Renewed Peace Negotiations

In late December, Haidar sent an emissary to Major Fitzgerald in Thiruchirappalli asking that a senior officer come to treat with him and discuss terms. The latter sent Captain Brooke, who had provided the succour to Wood at Mulbagal, and who started discussions at Haidar's camp⁶¹⁹. Haidar stated that the war was a misunderstanding between Mysore and the East India Company caused by Nawab Mohammad Ali's machinations and that he was desirous of a military alliance with the British against the Marathas who frequently raided the Mysore territories. He requested that a plenipotentiary be sent by the Madras government to negotiate the terms of the alliance. He asked for Colonel Smith as the envoy, as he had high regard for him, and also particularly that Mohammad Ali be excluded from the negotiations. When asked to send an envoy himself, he replied that the Nawab would cause mischief⁶²⁰. Brooke conveyed this message to Fitzgerald who promised to forward it to Madras; and so the hostilities between them were kept in abeyance for time being. But the Mysore army continued to ravage the Arcot territory which did not belong to Madras.

⁶¹⁹ Nolan, p. 323; Wilks, Vol. II, p. 115.

⁶²⁰ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 115; Letter from Fitzgerald to Madras dated January 11, 1769, *Secret Military Consultations*, pub. in Sheikh Ali, p. 123.

Haidar had good reasons for desiring peace and ending the war as he had regained his territories. Also, there was the very real danger that the bulk of the Madras Army in Kolar would return and throw its strength against him. But the paramount reason was that Haidar was deeply impressed by the spirit and fighting abilities of the British armies and so wanted to end the war quickly before it drained his resources further. If he could gain them as allies to support his army he could check the periodic raiding by the Marathas whom he regarded as his long-term foes. The non-British sources do not mention these preliminary negotiations. De la Tour said that the fall of Erode was followed by an attack on the city of Madras which led to the end of the war while Kirmani said that Haidar now waged war on the Nawab which led to the latter's submission⁶²¹. Punganuri said that he called on the French governor which was an exaggeration; a French delegation comprising of members of the Council of Pondicherry had come to Haidar who sold them the plunder generated by the campaign so far⁶²². He said the Mysore ruler then went on to plunder Arcot and arrived at the gates of Madras. Thus, the British records have to be relied on to reconstruct the events that followed.

The Madras government again sent a message through Captain Brooke asking for a ceasefire while a representative would be arriving to negotiate terms of settlement. On January 22, 1769, Haidar agreed to cease hostilities for a week and proposed that his army would withdraw to Wandiwash while the Madras Army would withdraw towards Kanchipuram where they would stay during the negotiations. The Madras government did not feel safe with Haidar being positioned so close to their city and hence proposed that he instead withdraw to Attur while their troops would be stationed in Tyagadurga⁶²³. At the same time, they reappointed Colonel Smith as the commander of the Madras Army on January 28 and told him to assemble his forces at Chittapet, a fort near Kanchipuram a little over 100 km southwest from Madras where he would be joined by the contingent of Colonel Lang which had reached Vellore by this time and had replenished itself⁶²⁴. Haidar instead asked that their armies be stationed at Polur and Kanchipuram respectively. Since neither could agree to the other's conditions, the two armies remained in the field while the diplomatic manoeuvring started. When Haidar appeared near Thiruvannamalai, Smith marched in that direction only to find on arrival that Haidar had gone to Thirukkivilur⁶²⁵. After several fruitless moves and

⁶²¹ Kirmani, pp. 280-283; M.M.D.L.T., pp. 242-243.

⁶²² Punganuri, p. 19; Wilks, Vol. II, p. 119.

⁶²³ Board's Minute on January 26, 1769, pub. in Sheikh Ali, p. 124; Wilks, Vol. II, p. 119.

⁶²⁴ *Select Committee Proceedings* dated March 26, 1769, pub. in Sinha, p. 138; Wilks, Vol. II, pp. 114-115.

⁶²⁵ Sinha, p. 139.

countermoves, the British commander had no option but to retreat to Chittapet and stay put till solid intelligence was obtained on Haidar's movements. This episode shows the bad faith by the Governor of Madras Charles Bouchier who seems to have believed that a final effort could be made against the main opponent who had personally appeared on the field.

This military stalemate increased the pressure on the British to terminate the war; and several members of the Council desired negotiations rather than a resumption of hostilities as the war had proved costly, earning the disapproval of the Board of Directors in London. But Bouchier vacillated and did not want to be at a disadvantage during the parleys; and so the Madras Army was to be kept in readiness for any eventuality. It is also probable that the Council was uneasy by the French contact with Haidar. The Madras government appointed John Andrews, a member of the Council, as their representative with full powers of negotiation. He was empowered to offer the following terms to Haidar; firstly, there would be a proposal for returning to the *status quo ante bellum* with mutual restoration of captured territories; however, if this proposal was rejected, then the Madras government could exchange certain territories with Mysore such as Kolar, Krishnagiri and Venkatagiri for Karur, Dindigul and Attur respectively. If this suggestion was also rejected, then all the conquests by the Madras Army would be given up in exchange for the forts of Dindigul and Melpadi⁶²⁶. Also, there would be no monetary claims on either party. However, two contentious issues which formed Haidar's main demands remained. Firstly, the Council wanted the Raja of Travancore as well as Murari Rao Ghorpade and Nawab Mohammad Ali would be party to the proposed treaty. This was certain to irritate Haidar who regarded them, especially the latter two, as his sworn enemies. Secondly, the government would not enter into any mutual defensive treaty with Mysore and instead would give a vague reply that the latter's friends and foes would be the same to the former⁶²⁷. Therefore, the proposed treaty offered nothing to Haidar which he did not have but did not seem to recognise his dominant position in the talks to be held.

John Andrews proceeded to Haidar's roving camp and met him in person on February 19th⁶²⁸. Haidar presented a memorandum which contained his terms viz., first and foremost, a defensive alliance had to be concluded between the two sides. Secondly, all the forts captured by the Madras Army had to be restored. Thirdly, all the Mysore ships captured by the

⁶²⁶ Instructions to Andrews dated January 28, *M.M.S.P.*, pub. in Sheikh Ali, p. 125.

⁶²⁷ Ibid.

⁶²⁸ Nolan, p. 323.

Bombay and the Bengal governments would be returned. The remaining points concerned the Nawab of Arcot. He would have to pay 2 lakhs of rupees in indemnity for ravaging Haidar's territories and would have to return all the elephants which he had captured during his campaign. Also, all of Chanda Sahib's family in the custody of the Nawab would have to be released. Finally, the Raja of Thanjavur would have to continue to pay the tribute to Mysore⁶²⁹. On his part, Andrews agreed to the mutual alliance of defence in principle but stated that the ships and elephants etc. would not be restituted as they came under the proper definition of the spoils of war. Also, they rejected demands for indemnity and the release of Chanda Sahib's relatives as well as the imposition of tribute on Thanjavur⁶³⁰. This was mainly because the Nawab and the Raja of Thanjavur were under the British protection and to whom huge loans had been advanced. If Haidar's tribute was imposed on them, they would find it difficult to fulfil their obligations to Madras. Thus the negotiations seemed to have reached a dead end. The only point which Andrews seemed to be willing to concede was on the mutual alliance, and this too was vague.

Resumption of Hostilities

On February 22, Andrews left Haidar's camp in order to convey the terms to the Madras government with an agreement that the ceasefire would continue for 12 more days. It was during this time that Haidar received the French delegation from Pondicherry which added to the existing tensions⁶³¹. Bouchier flatly rejected the terms offered; and may also have felt that Haidar was deliberately insulting the Council by consorting with the French, and the ceasefire was not renewed. However, this feeling was not unanimous as several members desired negotiations. The Council member Josias Du Pre said, "the war may also be ruinous to Hyder; yet it is no valid consolation that we ruin our enemy with us."⁶³² Because of the vagueness of the Indian and French records, the detailed British records have to be relied on for the reconstruction of the events for February and March 1769. At the end of February, the Mysore ruler sent his *vakil* Shama Rao to Smith in Chittapet where he reiterated his desire for peace but his steadfast resolution on excluding Mohammad Ali from the negotiations no

⁶²⁹ Haidar's memorandum dated February 25, *M.M.S.P.*, pub. in Sheikh Ali, p. 125.

⁶³⁰ Board's minute dated February 25, *M.M.S.P.*, pub. in Sheikh Ali, p. 126.

⁶³¹ *M.M.D.L.T.*, p. 243; Wilks, Vol. II, p. 119.

⁶³² Board's minute dated March 6, *M.M.S.P.*, pub. in Sheikh Ali, p. 127.

matter what. He also said that he was willing to wait for Bouchier's reply to his ultimatum and urged Smith to use his influence with the latter to speed up the negotiations⁶³³.

The Madras government terminated the ceasefire on March 6, obeying the deadline agreed upon. It had grounds for optimism as the Madras Army had been reinforced by additional troops. Colonel Lang had by now reached Madras territory and was stationed in Kanchipuram with his remaining forces numbering about 300 Europeans and 2000 sepoys; and he was supposed to support Smith from the north and Murari Rao's cavalry was still there to provide mobile support⁶³⁴. Haidar also indicated his readiness for battle and said, "I am coming to the gates of Madras, and I will there listen to the propositions the governor and council may have to make."⁶³⁵ The Mysore army under Makhdoom Ali and Faizullah Khan along with Haidar once more began to ravage the environs of Madras. So Smith had to move out with his available division to wage a fresh attack on his adversary. He had an important advantage this time around as he was fighting in his home territory and hence would not have to worry about men or supplies and so made a new strategy to defeat his old opponent. As Haidar was difficult to catch with the cumbersome artillery and baggage trains holding up the British troops, Smith's division now divested itself of unnecessary equipment and decided to chase the Mysore cavalry in the style of a flying column⁶³⁶. This would enable him to ambush the Mysore ruler and inflict a defeat on him in a pitched battle which was so necessary to impose the terms of the Madras government. With these new plans in mind, Smith set out of Chittapet to search for Haidar Ali and his army.

The Orme manuscripts and the military despatches of Smith's division give an account of the progress made. Wilks said that Smith made optimum use of the resources on hand and once nearly caught Haidar on the wrong foot between Gingee and Madras where the latter escaped with difficulty⁶³⁷. But there is no mention of this encounter in the Orme manuscripts or in the Madras records and Wilks himself is vague about the date. So this particular incident can be discounted. But on March 14, Smith received intelligence that Haidar intended to move on Madras from the northwest direction, and so he immediately marched in the direction of Wandiwash which effectively frustrated Haidar's plan⁶³⁸. But roving bands of cavalry

⁶³³ Wilks, Vol. II, pp. 119-120.

⁶³⁴ Sinha, p. 139; Wilks, Vol. II, p. 120.

⁶³⁵ M.M.D.L.T., p. 243; Wilks, Vol. II, p. 120.

⁶³⁶ Sinha, p. 139; Wilks, Vol. II, p. 120.

⁶³⁷ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 120.

⁶³⁸ Orme MSS., vol. 115, pub. in Sinha, p. 140.

continued to attack his flanks and rear causing him to follow them up to Chingleput where they disappeared by circling around him. At this time, Lang sent a message to Smith that he was unable to move out from Kanchipuram due to Haidar's attacks in the vicinity; and so the latter moved further northwards to relieve the former. On joining with Lang, Smith made a new plan where he would move south against Haidar's army while the former would move his force in a parallel line to the west⁶³⁹. The idea was to trap the Mysore cavalry with a pincer movement. During these manoeuvres, if any one of the commanders would encounter Haidar, then he would drive him towards the other, thus pinning him down from two directions and cutting of the route of retreat.

In the meantime, Haidar prepared for his boldest stroke which was a tactical masterpiece. Through his excellent intelligence network, he saw that the British officers were pursuing him further and further away from Madras, leaving the city virtually defenceless. If he were able to put a sufficient distance between the Madras Army and the city, then he could outflank the British forces and double back to attack Madras directly. To this end, he divested himself of all unnecessary baggage and sent it along with his entire infantry and artillery to Attur. He retained 6000 select cavalry which he had personally handpicked along with two companies of the infantry of his personal bodyguard amounting to 100 men each under Jahan Khan and Man Khan respectively (Wilks claims to have gleaned these figures from an interview with Jahan Khan which gives them an air of authenticity)⁶⁴⁰. These troops were armed with swords, bows and light matchlocks and did not carry any artillery or heavy equipment which would impede their motion. These dispositions would likely have happened during the third week of March when Smith and Lang were proceeding south from Kanchipuram to try to force a pitched battle with Haidar. It is probably Haidar's intelligence about their movements which prompted this daring strategy to try to end the war. It was also fraught with risks because if the British happened to intercept him during the progress of his campaign and fought a pitched battle such as at Changama or Mulbagal or others, then the casualties on his side would be great due to the light armament of his troops though it would not prevent him from disappearing again to try another day.

On his part, Smith did not have reliable intelligence with which to conduct his campaign as his scouts did not have the reach of Haidar's cavalry. Usually the scouting parties that he sent out, comprising of Murari Rao's horsemen, would more often than not be captured by the

⁶³⁹ Orme MSS., vol. 115, pub. in Sinha, p. 140.

⁶⁴⁰ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 120.

Haidar's troops. Therefore, he was forced to rely on hearsay and rumours in order to plan his next move. He had heard that Haidar had been seen in the vicinity of Wandiwash and so proceeded there with Lang one day's march behind approaching in a parallel line to the west. He reached his destination on March 23 but there was no sign of his opponent there. The only thing he could do was wait for Lang over there and send out scouts to gather intelligence and look out for new developments. Finally, on the 27th he learnt there that Haidar had deposited his guns and other equipment at Attur and had outflanked the British army on the right and was now proceeding towards the rear of Smith's lines which, incidentally, was the route to Madras⁶⁴¹. Smith now realised the probable direction of Haidar's march and his intentions and so tried to hasten back. The trouble was that there was a distance of over 100 km between Wandiwash and Madras, and it would take several days to cover this on foot. But as there was no other option Smith did his best and marched back at a rapid pace. The dates of reaching the places mentioned in his despatches indicates the speed of his movements; he reached Karanguli on the 29th, Chingleput on the 30th and Vandalur the next day⁶⁴². He was barely 30 km from Madras on the 31st when he received orders from the Council to halt and stay put. The reason for this soon became apparent.

Haidar Ali Reaches the Outskirts of Madras

In a remarkable feat of tactical manoeuvring, Haidar had withdrawn up to Wandiwash, luring the British forces south with him, and then outflanked the armies of both Smith and Lang towards the west in order to head through the Carnatic to Madras where he appeared at St. Thomas' Mount on March 29th. This would have required the covering of more than 200 km in a duration of 3-5 days which was remarkable for this time. Wilks gives the time period as 3-1/2 days (probably through his interviews)⁶⁴³; but this is unlikely as Haidar had withdrawn from Wandiwash by the time of Smith's arrival on March 23 and arrived at the gates of Madras on the 29th which indicates a period of around 5 days. The Diary of Fort St. George gives a vivid description of the attack on the city and the inhabitants' reaction. On the evening of March 28, Captain Pascal who was in charge of Chingleput sent a message to Madras that the Mysore cavalry had been sighted around the town; and by midnight the

⁶⁴¹ Orme MSS., vol. 115, pub. in Sinha, p. 140.

⁶⁴² Ibid.

⁶⁴³ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 121.

lookout positioned on St. Thomas' Mount signalled that they had passed that location⁶⁴⁴. The next morning, several parties of cavalry appeared at various localities in Madras like Santhome, Egmore and Triplicane. A few of the stragglers were captured at noon who gave out the information that Haidar had arrived with a large contingent of cavalry but no artillery or infantry and was hovering around Santhome with his men. In fact his infantry would not arrive till the 30th. Immediately, an urgent message was sent recalling Smith from the south⁶⁴⁵. At the same time measures for defence were taken and a detachment was sent to the Garden House, the governor's residence which had been attacked earlier by Tipu, to protect it while armed individual residents fired at the intruders.

Haidar now appeared to move north with his army with the obvious intention of attacking the Black Town. He had deliberately avoided attacking Fort St. George knowing that it was defended by artillery but the native quarter would be open to attack. A detachment under Lieutenant-Colonel Hart was sent for its defence while Major Bonjour assumed command of the detail guarding the Garden House with orders to move to the Black Town if needed. But these had little impact as the plundering in the other suburbs that had started in the previous day was in full swing and it is also unlikely that the tiny detachments could have done much to stop it. At this point, Haidar stopped just short of entering the Black Town and, in the evening at around 6 o' clock, sent a *cowle* (letter) each to the governor, Charles Bouchier, and the Second of Council Josias Du Pre, the latter of which is reproduced below:-

“Hyder Ali Cawn to Josias Du Pre”

“I have been desirous of seeing you for this long time, and, being now arrived in your Neighbourhood, have wrote to the Governor to send you hither to carry on a negociation of Peace. By the blessing of God you are a great Sardar, Wise and experienced in all Matters. You have, moreover, lately carryed on a Correspondence of Letters relative to Peace, which makes me still more earnest to see you... Whatever may tend to the establishing of a lasting peace between Us, I shall inform you of in Person. Let me therefore have the pleasure of seeing you as soon as possible. You may return again to the Governor in 2 Garries. I have sent you a Cowle under my Seal. I hope therefore you will be under no apprehension of coming to me, but come with a Mind entirely at ease. I repeat it again, that you may return to the Governor in 2 Garries time, and settle the peace there. When you set out from Madrass

⁶⁴⁴ *Fort St. George Diary dated March 28th and 29th, Military Consultations*, pub. H.D. Love, *Vestiges of Old Madras*, p. 597.

⁶⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

you will despatch a Camel Hircarah before, with a Letter, that I may find a great Sardar to meet you near my Army.

May your happiness always increase.”⁶⁴⁶

Bourchier called an extraordinary meeting of the Council where it was decided to send Du Pre to Haidar for negotiations as demanded by the latter⁶⁴⁷. Implicit in this was the recognition of the fact that the city of Madras lay defenceless against the invading army led by an extremely able commander. Du Pre was given plenipotentiary powers and was told to offer the same terms as Andrews had offered the previous month. At the same time, a message was sent to Smith directing him to obey Du Pre's orders and halt at the point he had reached⁶⁴⁸. As for Haidar, the move to invite Du Pre was a diplomatic masterstroke. The Mysore ruler was aware that the Second-In-Council was one of the leaders of the faction that desired to end hostilities rather than continue them; and so he would be more amenable to negotiations and could push the case with the other members, particularly Bourchier. Also, Bourchier's term as governor was ending the following January and Du Pre was tipped to succeed him; and so Haidar was probably sizing him up. This is a testimony to Haidar's excellent system of espionage which enabled him to keep tabs on even the innermost working of the Madras government and probe the strengths and weaknesses of the individual members and also his keen knowledge of human nature in order to turn the situation to his advantage.

In the meantime during the last week of March, Smith had been moving north towards Madras in the hope of relieving the city or at least intercepting Haidar's troops. He had sent Lang's detachment to the region between Tyagadurga and Thiruvannamalai with instructions to set up base in either of the forts and to attack the supply train of Haidar's main army if it passed near Attur or Changama⁶⁴⁹. But this was an unrealistic plan as the distance between the base and the points chosen for attack was too great and involved slogging over mountainous terrain which would wear out Lang's already overstretched troops. Besides, he could hardly hope to achieve much with his limited force of around 400 Europeans and 1000 sepoy against Haidar's army which numbered in the thousands. But Lang eagerly took up the chance of reaching a base where he could resupply himself and Smith later criticised him for being inactive. The latter had continued his movements and had reached Vandalur by the

⁶⁴⁶ *Madras Country Correspondence* dated March 28, pub. H.D. Love, *Vestiges of Old Madras*, p. 598.

⁶⁴⁷ Board's minute dated March 29, *M.M.S.P.*, pub. in Sheikh Ali, p. 127.

⁶⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴⁹ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 122.

end of the month where he received instructions to halt. But Haidar, who knew his capacity, was unwilling to have him so near the theatre of operations while the Mysore ruler's army was not in full readiness. Therefore, he insisted that Smith move his troops to a position 25 miles (40 km) away which was complied with by the order of the Madras government⁶⁵⁰. These new instructions reached Smith on April 1, and he replied that he would do so on the following day. Haidar moved northwards on the morning of April 2; and the Madras government, fearing for the safety of the Black Town, sent a messenger to Smith asking him to comply with the orders immediately which the latter obeyed. Haidar sought to assuage the alarm caused and said that he had moved north further than the native quarter in order to find forage for his troops⁶⁵¹. Thus, Colonel Joseph Smith's role in the war was effectively over.

Diplomatic Negotiations and the Treaty of Madras

Josias Du Pre set out to meet Haidar on the morning of March 30th. He met the escort of the Mysore cavalry at the Marmalong Bridge and was then conducted by them to Haidar's camp north of Madras. Having spent the whole day there, he returned to Fort St. George in the evening where he outlined the terms offered by the Mysore sovereign which were deliberated for the next two days⁶⁵². They were basically the same as outlined to Andrews the previous month. The first and most important part was the proposal for a mutual defensive alliance. Haidar proposed that "In case either of the contracting parties shall be attacked, they shall mutually assist each other to drive the enemy out."⁶⁵³ Secondly, the Raja of Thanjavur was to be included in this treaty; and if he was to be excluded, then Murari Rao Ghorpade and the Raja of Travancore would also have to be excluded. Thirdly, Haidar asked that his ships and treasures seized by the British be restored to him or he would not release the captured prisoners. Next, there would be the mutual restitution of the conquered territories and the prisoners taken. Lastly, the surviving members of the family of Chanda Sahib were to be released from the custody of the Nawab Mohammad Ali⁶⁵⁴.

Du Pre had to tread a fine line with regard to these demands. The first demand for a defensive alliance was easy as it could be vaguely worded to suit both the parties. The second demand was more difficult as the inclusion of the Raja of Thanjavur would involve complications

⁶⁵⁰ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 122.

⁶⁵¹ Ibid, p. 123.

⁶⁵² H.D. Love, *Vestiges of Old Madras*, p. 598.

⁶⁵³ Sheikh Ali, p. 128.

⁶⁵⁴ Ibid; Wilks, Vol. II, pp. 125-126.

with the Nawab of Arcot, who claimed sovereignty over Thanjavur, as well as the other Polygars⁶⁵⁵. Du Pre expressed his inability to meet the third demand for the restoration of the ships and the treasures as they had been seized by the Bombay and Bengal governments. He agreed for the mutual restitution of captured territories. But here also there was a hitch because Haidar wanted to retain Karur; Du Pre tried to get it back stating that it had been captured in the war but the former was adamant on this point. But the biggest bone of contention was the release of Chanda Sahib's family. This would involve the Company in a direct confrontation with the Nawab Mohammad Ali who feared that the heirs of Chanda Sahib, like Mir Ali Raza Khan, could be used as rallying points in order to overthrow him. Du Pre tried to hedge on this point, saying that this family was entirely unrelated to the war and was under the protection of the Madras government for which it was a point of honour. Haidar then demanded their release on humanitarian grounds, saying that there were oppressed by the Nawab and also stated that it would be an unwritten agreement between them. Du Pre promised to discuss the terms offered with the governor and the Council and also agreed to move Smith's troops away from Madras which was done on April 2⁶⁵⁶.

The Council of Madras convened a meeting on March 31 and invited the Nawab of Arcot to join in the deliberations. The latter went through the agreed points and reluctantly gave his assent, particularly with regard to Chanda Sahib's relatives. It was on this point that the Council had to use great persuasion to make him agree to this. Also, another of Haidar's demands was that the Nawab not be mentioned by name in the treaty. So the Madras government obtained a letter authorising them to conduct negotiations on his behalf. However, now the chief sticking point of the treaty was the restitution of the ships and the treasures as the Madras government had no control over them. In the meantime, Haidar sent his *vakils* Meenaji Pandit and Shama Rao to Fort St. George to finalise the terms of the treaty⁶⁵⁷. The discussions went on for the next two days when Haidar made his threatening gesture of moving north. The Council immediately sent their proposals to him while explaining their inability to restore the ships. Haidar proposed a compromise in which he would forgo the ships if the stores kept in the forts of Kolar and Venkatagiri were given up to

⁶⁵⁵ Note: The Raja of Thanjavur had paid 4 lakhs to Haidar Ali and none to Madras or the Nawab to whom he was subject. If Haidar proclaimed the Raja his subject then the latter would escape punishment from the Nawab. See Sheikh Ali, pp. 128-129.

⁶⁵⁶ Board's minute dated March 31, *M.M.S.P.*, pub. in Sheikh Ali, pp. 128-129.

⁶⁵⁷ Ibid.

him. This was agreed to but, to retain their reputation, the Council asked that it be verbal and not be included in the treaty⁶⁵⁸.

The final terms for the treaty were drawn up and signed by the Council on April 2 and this document was conveyed to Haidar on the following day by Edward Stracey, the Persian translator of the Company, who duly fixed his seal on it⁶⁵⁹. Stracey signed for the government and returned to Madras the next day bearing Haidar's greetings to Charles Bouchier which read "I have the pleasure of your letter. The seeing of Mr. Stracy gave me great Satisfaction. By him I was informed of everything you had entrusted to him to acquaint me with, which tended to strengthen the friendship and regard between Us. Agreeable to your desire, I have put my Seal to the treaty you sent. You will receive it by the above Gentleman, to whom I beg leave to refer you for further particulars, as well as circumstances of Colonel Smith's Marching to-day.

May your Happiness and Joy ever last."⁶⁶⁰

The Treaty of Madras

The treaty of Madras which was signed on April 3, 1769, consisted of five articles. The main points of the treaty were:-

- 1.) There would be a mutual cessation of hostilities and restoration of territories held by the opposing forces⁶⁶¹. The exception was Karur which Haidar claimed as traditional Mysore territory and hence remained in his possession.
- 2.) There would be a mutual exchange of prisoners between the Presidency of Madras and the Kingdom of Mysore.
- 3.) The most important clause called for a defensive alliance between Mysore and the Madras government against an invasion by a third party.
- 4.) The remaining articles confirmed the trading privileges granted to the East India Company before the outbreak of hostilities. This was particularly relevant to the Bombay government which kept up a lucrative trade in pepper and other spices in Mangalore and the Malabar coast⁶⁶².

⁶⁵⁸ Board's minute dated April 2, *M.M.S.P.*, pub. in Sheikh Ali, p. 129.

⁶⁵⁹ H.D. Love, *Vestiges of Old Madras*, p. 598; Sheikh Ali, p. 130; Wilks, Vol. II, p. 124.

⁶⁶⁰ *Madras Country Correspondence* dated April 4, pub. in H.D. Love, *Vestiges of Old Madras*, p. 598.

⁶⁶¹ Aitchison, pp. 128-130; Punganuri, p. 19; Wilks, Vol. II, pp. 124-126.

⁶⁶² Aitchison, pp. 130.

It can be seen from the aforementioned stipulations that the terms asked for by Haidar were granted. Also, there were no pecuniary demands from either side in the final treaty. This is because the Madras government had gone virtually bankrupt during the course of the war and was forced to subsist on loans granted by the Bengal government⁶⁶³. It was also for the same reason that it was unable to restore the ships and treasures seized. Haidar also seems to have moderated his demands so as not to push the Madras government into a corner.

Surprisingly, the events of March 1769 and the resulting treaty receive scant coverage in the non-British sources. Among them, Punganuri gives the most factually accurate account of the proceedings, stating that when General Smith was 30-40 miles (48-64 km) away, Haidar suddenly descended on Madras and was met by Du Pre (whom he calls Doobur and erroneously styles as the governor) to discuss terms⁶⁶⁴. He said that the resulting treaty stipulated that the British would vacate all the territories taken from Haidar (but is silent about the vice-versa) and the dependants of Chanda Sahib would be released. On his part, Haidar agreed to release all the prisoners he had taken⁶⁶⁵. This is partially in agreement with the British sources. Kirmani gives an account which is confused in several places. According to him, both Haidar and Smith, whom he calls two lions, were bent on destroying each other and in the process were laying waste the Carnatic-Payanghat. The Nawab Mohammad Ali was distressed at his territory being ravaged by both the sides and therefore decided to treat with Haidar. He sent his emissaries to Haidar and paid a tribute of 4 lakhs of rupees with other presents and asked for negotiations⁶⁶⁶. After discussions, it was agreed that the two governments would support each other and Chanda Sahib's relatives would be released and Karur would be transferred to Haidar's control⁶⁶⁷. Kirmani has twisted several facts in his narrative. The tribute of 4 lakhs was paid by the Raja of Thanjavur and the negotiations and treaty were conducted with the British rather than the Nawab. A possible explanation for this is that he wants to show Haidar as victorious over his old adversary, Nawab Mohammad Ali Khan Walajah.

The account of De la Tour also is riddled with inaccuracies and confusion. He said that Haidar descended on Madras from the side of Pulicat and immediately showed a flag of truce

⁶⁶³ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 127.

⁶⁶⁴ Punganuri, p. 19.

⁶⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁶ Kirmani, pp. 284-287.

⁶⁶⁷ Ibid.

asking for negotiations. The Council then appointed Du Pre and James Bouchier (the brother of the governor) to discuss terms; and a ceasefire took place in the surroundings of Madras only. Finally two treaties were signed on April 15, 1770; one between Haidar and the British and the other with Mohammad Ali⁶⁶⁸. In the former, it was agreed that there would be peace between King George III and Haidar and all prisoners would be released and commerce would continue as before. In the latter, Mohammad Ali would vacate Hoskote and would pay 6 lakhs of rupees as tribute annually and all the families of princes in his custody would be released⁶⁶⁹. With regard to the date, De la Tour confuses the Treaty of Madras with another treaty signed between Haidar and the Bombay government in 1770. In other places, he presents a confused version which is only partly true. This is surprising for a memoirist whose account is fairly accurate up to that point. One plausible reason is that he is confusing the events of 1769 with those of the Second Anglo-Mysore War, in which the French took part, which was going on when he wrote his account.

Aftermath

On April 5, a delegation comprising of Du Pre, John Andrews and James Bouchier called on Haidar at his camp and offered the customary presents. On his part, Haidar offered to return the visit by calling on Charles Bouchier and the Nawab but this was declined as politely as possible. The reason was that Bouchier was anxious that Haidar leave as soon as possible because his presence was a potential threat to Madras which was virtually defenceless at that point with the contingents of both Smith and Lang being away⁶⁷⁰. This again reveals how little the British knew about Haidar's character. It was very unlikely that he would attack them now because the peace treaty had been signed. Usually Haidar abided by the treaties he had made, especially with European powers, and when he broke them it was due to expediency. At this point breaking the Treaty of Madras offered little advantage to him as most of his demands had been met except for money. It is unlikely that money was an object because his demands had been very low, for just 2 lakhs of rupees. His aim was probably to humiliate Mohammad Ali. But the Madras government showed bad faith by even now entertaining hopes of overpowering him, and wrote to Smith about this⁶⁷¹. But the latter was dubious about the chances of success given the fatigue and poor supply situation among the

⁶⁶⁸ M.M.D.L.T., pp. 243-245.

⁶⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁰ Letter from Bouchier to Smith dated April 5, *Orme MSS.*, pub. in Sheikh Ali, p. 130.

⁶⁷¹ Board's minute dated April 6th, *M.M.S.P.*, pub. in Sheikh Ali, p. 131.

troops who could not live off the scorched land around them. However, the problem was solved by itself when Haidar withdrew to return to Mysore on April 6. As a concession to the Madras government, he returned by the route they chose for him and not indulging in any plundering during his journey⁶⁷². On his return, he released as many 205 Europeans from his prisons on May 28. Also, he confirmed all the trading and other privileges granted in the treaty of Madras with respect to the Bombay and the Madras governments⁶⁷³. Thus the hostilities finally had ended.

There is an interesting anecdote that is mentioned in some of the accounts of the war. De la Tour said Haidar ordered a caricature made of himself seated under a canopy on a row of cannons with Du Pre and Bouchier were kneeling before him and Haidar holding the nose of the former which was drawn elongated like the trunk of an elephant and gold and silver coins were falling from the mouth of the Council member. In the background was Fort St. George on whose bastions the governor and the Council were represented as being on their knees. In the distance was the Madras Army with Smith breaking his sword in a gesture of surrender. This cartoon was nailed to the Royal Gate of Fort St. George⁶⁷⁴. However, this incident is not mentioned in any other source and so it seems to be apochryphal. Also, it certainly does not agree with Haidar's temperament during his presence near Madras as is illustrated by another incident. The Mysore ruler had the greatest regard for Colonel Smith who had regularly defeated him in battle after battle. After the war, he had expressed the wish to meet Smith whom he called his 'preceptor' in battle but circumstances did not allow it and so he requested that a portrait of the British commander be sent to him which was accordingly done so⁶⁷⁵. So it seems unlikely that he would have gone out of his way to insult the Madras government. Also, he had spoken courteously and impeccably to Du Pre and the other members of the Council during their visit to him. So, in all likelihood he never ordered the caricature to be made. But it certainly existed as it is mentioned in the British sources consulted by N.K. Sinha. Therefore, it is very likely that it was a French propaganda painting which was tacked to the gates of the Madras fort.

⁶⁷² Board's minute dated April 6th, *M.M.S.P.*, pub. in Sheikh Ali, p. 131.

⁶⁷³ Letter from Madras to the Court of Directors dated June 27, *Letters Recvd.*, pub. in Sheikh Ali, p. 134.

⁶⁷⁴ *M.M.D.L.T.*, p. 246; Sinha, p. 142.

⁶⁷⁵ Wilks, Vol. II, p. 116.

Epilogue to the War

With the end of the war, the stocktaking began, particularly on the side of the British. After nearly two decades of unbroken success for the East India Company with victory in several battles like Madras and Wandiwash against the French and Buxar and Plassey against the Indian powers, they had now been forced to make a humiliating submission to a local Indian power headed by what they considered an upstart usurper. The mood in the British camp is summed up in a letter by Du Pre to Robert Orme where he said, “We have at length concluded a Peace with Hyder such as will do us no honor; yet it was necessary, and there was no alternative but that or worse. The reason it seems so disgraceful is that it [the war] was begun with ideas of Conquest on our part, and it is said this is first time a Country Enemy has gained an Advantage over Us.”⁶⁷⁶ Another letter written by the Member of Parliament William Fullarton in the 1780s describes the whole war as a ‘disgraceful affair’ which is blamed entirely on the Council of Madras⁶⁷⁷. This explains why several officers like Wood and Orton were court-martialled and an enquiry committee set up by the Court of Directors to analyse the situation⁶⁷⁸. In its letter to the Court, the Council of Madras laid the blame on the Nawab for his inability to provide the Madras Army with the needed supplies as well as the necessary cavalry support. It also pointed out the lack of a cavalry corps in the Madras army and the lack of a regular money supply⁶⁷⁹.

The enquiry committee submitted its findings in November 1769 where it exonerated the British officers and the members of the Madras government and laid the blame on faulty supplies due to lack of pack animals. The result was that a Department of Supply and Provisioning was set up in 1770⁶⁸⁰. This was essentially a cover-up and a patch-up effort to ensure that the lucrative trade in supplies and provisions remained in the hands of the Company’s servants. The root causes such as lack of cavalry and inadequate money supply were not addressed. These issues would again return to haunt the British during the Second Anglo-Mysore War. In 1781, during that conflict, Sir Eyre Coote, the Commander-in-Chief of the British army wrote of “the bad consequences arising from the exercise of a separate

⁶⁷⁶ Letter from Du Pre to Robert Orme dated June 10th, 1769, *Orme MSS.*, vol. xxx., pub. H.D. Love, *Vestiges of Old Madras*, p. 599.

⁶⁷⁷ William Fullarton, *A View of the English Interests in India*, T. Cadell and W. Creech, Edinburgh, 1787, pp. 13-15.

⁶⁷⁸ Wilson, p. 277.

⁶⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁰ Ibid, p. 279.

authority” which meant the Nawab of Arcot’s failure to supply the army⁶⁸¹. Throughout the duration of the Anglo-Mysore Wars which lasted for more than three decades, the Nawab proved very unreliable with regard to providing logistics and other kinds of support to the East India Company’s armies⁶⁸².

The most lasting effect of the First Anglo-Mysore War was on British policy. After the Treaty of Madras, there was a very real reorganisation of the British administration after the War of 1767-1769. The Board of Directors felt that a greater coordination among the three British governments in India would prevent such a defeat from occurring again. This led to, among other events, to the Regulating Act of 1773 which appointed the Governor of Bengal as the Governor-General of India. It seems to be no coincidence that this position went to Warren Hastings, who had earlier served as Second-in-Council at Madras during the governorship of Josias Du Pre⁶⁸³. Since the Madras government had undergone reorganization in the aftermath of the war, Hastings was brought to Calcutta to effect changes there in 1771⁶⁸⁴. He would ultimately become the Governor-General of India in 1773 when the British government in London decided to consolidate its holdings in India in order to maintain and preserve them. Thus in the Second Anglo-Mysore War, the British colonies of Bengal, Bombay and Madras would pool their resources in fighting against Mysore. This reorganization put them in a much better position to face the coalition of Mysore which now included the open support of the French.

Retrospect of the War

The Treaty of Madras ended the First Anglo-Mysore War. Being a short document, the treaty was more of a ceasefire than an agreement designed to be long-lasting. Only the immediate issues that had occurred in the last few months of the war were resolved while the original causes remained. None of the issues of dispute such as the Malabar or the passes in the Carnatic were discussed. But it was the best option that was available to both the parties under the circumstances with Haidar being determined to benefit to the maximum extent possible and the Madras government trying to yield as less as possible. Haidar Ali’s own gains from the conflict had been minimal. Territorially he had gained only Karur while losing several territories in the north and the west. Madhugiri, Savanur and Kurnool had been lost to

⁶⁸¹ C.A. Bayly, p. 60.

⁶⁸² Ibid.

⁶⁸³ Davenport Adams, p. 92.

⁶⁸⁴ Ibid, p. 95.

the Marathas and Murari Rao; and Haidar had been forced to relinquish his territories in the Malabar in order to reinforce his army elsewhere. But most of the territories he had lost were the recent conquests and he still retained his core territory of Mysore, Bangalore and Bidanur as well as territories in the Carnatic such as Coimbatore, Dindigul and Palakkad. His main achievement in the war was that he had not been defeated even though he faced attacks from three directions and was able to end it with a satisfactory conclusion. Also, from his point of view he had a major gain by the so-called alliance with the Madras government but he lacked both the astuteness and the strength to make sure that the Council lived up to this agreement. This was starkly displayed in the year 1770 when the Marathas invaded Mysore and the Madras government did not send its army to the relief of its purported ally. It was this perfidy of the British that made Haidar a strong opponent of the East India Company and led to the Second Anglo-Mysore War in which Haidar was instrumental in forming an alliance with the Nizam and the Marathas against the British.

The Marathas were the other major gainers from the War of 1767-1769. Peshwa Madhav Rao I had demonstrated that he could strike almost at will in the territories of both the Nizam and Haidar who could do little to stop him. It is true that he had taken only the outlying forts and not the strongly defended ones in the interior but Haidar was ultimately forced to make peace with him in order to stop his advance. Madhav Rao and Murari Rao Ghorpade had regained several territories from Haidar and had also been able to extract a huge sum of money with which their war economy could be kept in motion. But what is not generally recognised is that Madhav Rao gained enormous prestige as a kingmaker who could alter the balance of power. It was only because his army could make the difference that the British, the Nizam and even Haidar tried to solicit his support during the war. It was only the internal differences and Madhav Rao's own personal nature of sticking to an agreement that prevented greater Maratha involvement in the war. It was because of the prestige of the Maratha cavalry that the Madras government enlisted the cavalry corps of Murari Rao against Haidar. Also, the mutual defensive alliance concluded at the war's end was aimed primarily at Madhav Rao in Haidar's eyes. Thus it was clear that no permanent settlement could take place in peninsular India without Maratha involvement.

The Nizam and Nawab Mohammad Ali of Arcot were among the defeated parties in the war. Nizam Ali Khan had entered the war hoping to gain territory either at Haidar's expense or regaining the Northern Circars with his support. He had been disappointed on both counts

and had to suffer several humiliating defeats at the hands of the British who overran his territory. However, he suffered little immediate loss either territorially or monetarily. He had been subsidised by the Marathas and then by Haidar during the war and when the British imposed their peace terms on him, they kept only the Northern Circars, for which they would pay rent, and put no other demands on him except that he would give moral support to their campaign against Haidar. Therefore he had reason to feel satisfied with his lot. The case of Mohammad Ali was different as he had supported the British war effort and had to suffer from Haidar's attacks on his territory. He had been subsidised by the Madras government during the war and then had to endure the ravaging of many of his most productive lands by the cavalry of Haidar and Faizullah Khan. Though the only loss to him territorially was Karur, he would take a long time to recover from the devastation inflicted on his lands and hence became more and more dependent on the Madras government for money and protection.

The Madras government was the undisputed loser in the whole conflict. It had entered the war with grand designs of conquest and glory but ended up making a humiliating submission. Not only had its prestige taken a serious hammering but also it had suffered materially and financially. The Madras Army had suffered serious casualties during the war which had reduced its fighting strength. The cost of supplying the army as well as Mohammad Ali and Murari Rao had bankrupted the Madras government which was forced to borrow heavily from the Bengal government⁶⁸⁵. It was for this reason that Du Pre had insisted that no monetary claims be made on any party. Furthermore, the war had ramifications for the whole East India Company as the prices of its stock on the London Stock Exchange had fallen sharply due to the defeat which impacted its profit margins and increased the pressure on it from the British public. This is the reason as to why a thorough enquiry was ordered into the conduct of the war in order to fix responsibility for the defeat. It was felt that there was a lack of coordination between the governments of Bengal, Bombay and Madras; and so it indirectly led to the Regulating Act of 1773 and the appointment of Warren Hastings as Governor-General. In the short term, it put an end to British ambitions in the Deccan for several years.

⁶⁸⁵ Note: The figures given for a Parliamentary committee on expenditure showed that out of a total spending of a sum of 22 million pounds spent by the Bengal government between 1761-62 and 1770-71, 9.7 million pounds (44%) had been spent on the army and fortifications in the provinces while large sums had been given to Madras to sustain wars there. See P.J. Marshall, *The New Cambridge History of India, Volume II: Bengal: The British Bridgehead: Eastern India, 1740-1828*, CUP, Cambridge, 1987, p. 135.

The Madras Army would not be involved in a conflict till the outbreak of the Second Anglo-Mysore War in 1780.

Though Haidar had emerged victorious from the war, he again failed to exploit it strategically for long-term gains by trying to remove permanently any of the threatening potentates on his borders, even minor ones like Murari Rao or Nawab Mohammad Ali Walajah. Also, he made no efforts to strengthen his army and administration by appointing capable commanders or by incorporating new weapons and tactics. This is reflected in his forgiving Mir Raza Ali Khan for his transgressions in surrendering Sira and defecting to the Marathas. Haidar at this time regarded the Marathas as his main enemies but was lax in developing effective measures against them and was defeated by them time and again. Most of his triumphs against them came in the 1770s after the death of Madhava Rao. While the British tried to learn the lessons of the war, Haidar seems to have been content with their agreement in the Treaty of Madras for a joint alliance against the Marathas while not realising that alliances were made and broken easily in the fluid political climate. Also, he doesn't seem to have made any serious effort to develop an effective fighting force on European lines even after the debacles suffered by his grenadiers in the war. In short, he seems to have regarded his victory over the British as another tactical episode in his career which was no different from his earlier triumphs. Thus the conclusion can be drawn that the British learnt their lessons from the war while Haidar failed to learn his.



	British Army		Mysore Army
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Above: The map illustrates the events from January to April 1769. While the British army under Colonel Smith had reached Wandiwash from Madras in pursuit of Haidar Ali, the Mysore ruler, from his base in Tyagadurga, circled around the British troops and laid siege to the city of Madras which lay undefended.

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